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The Story of the Nations

THE
STORY OF THE JEWS

BY

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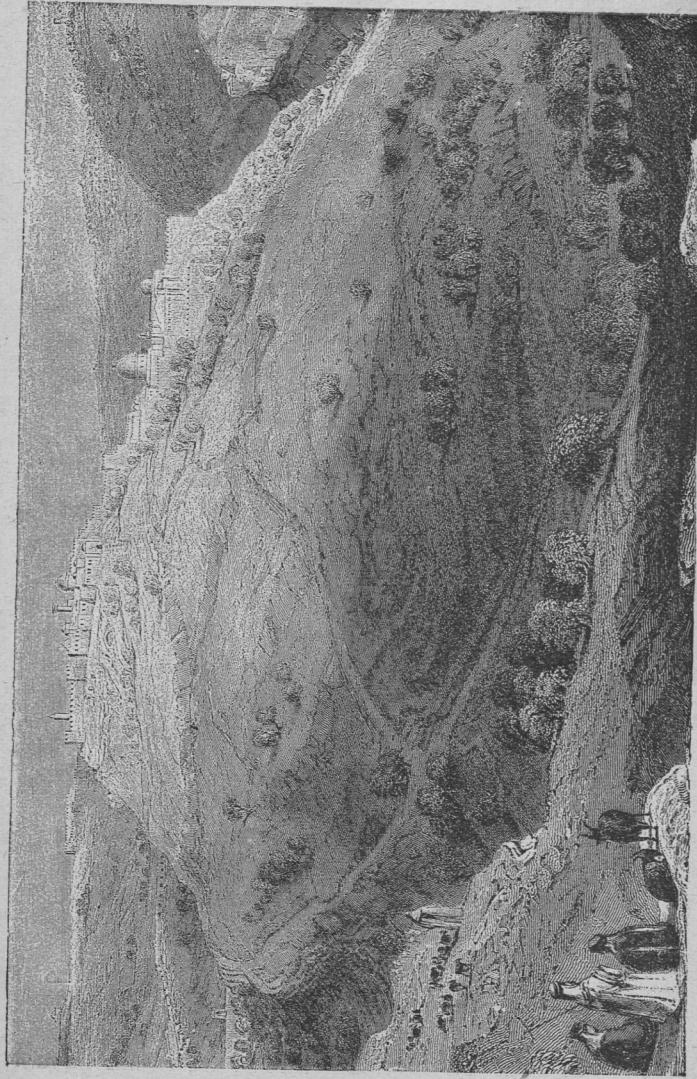
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JERUSALEM FROM THE HILL OF EVIL COUNSEL.

Frontispiece.



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PREFACE.

To write "The Story of the Jews" for the series in which it is to appear has been a task beset with certain special embarrassments.

In the first place, it may reasonably be doubted whether a faithfully related story of the Jews is suitable reading for immature minds. The prudent parent shrinks from putting into the hands of his child Hamlet, or Lear, or Othello. In the first, the terrible soul agony,—in the second, the ruthless exercise of the most savage passions,—in the third, the malignant, snake-like craft crushing in its folds unsuspecting manly worth and womanly loveliness,—this tragedy of the deepest requires full maturity in order that its lessons may be intelligently received and its power fully realized. Such literature is meat for men, not milk for babes; and it is quite premature to undertake it, until experience has thoroughly settled the character. Has not history as well as poetry its tragedies quite too sombre for childhood,—and among its tragedies is there any quite so dark as the story of the Jews? Where else are problems presented which so defy satisfactory solution? Where else is it necessary to contemplate the play of

spiritual forces so tremendous? Where else is there anguish so deep and long-continued?

A second embarrassment arises from the fact that in the story of the Jews many points are presented with regard to which the feelings of men are so keen and at the same time so conflicting. To-day, throughout the civilized world, many regard the Hebrews with dislike, perhaps aversion, as an unattractive, indeed a dangerous element in society. Certainly this story cannot be written without demonstrating to how large an extent this prejudice is cruel and unjust, however inveterate and explicable,—an effort which is certain, in some quarters, to be ill taken. As regards the ancient period, can the account be given without some attempt to separate fact from myth,—to circumscribe within just limits the natural and the supernatural; and can such discriminations be attempted without giving offence in one quarter or another? Protestant, Catholic, Rationalist, Jew, have, each one, his peculiar point of view,—and each one, if he is at all earnest, regards the matters in dispute as things by no means far off, but of vital, present importance.

The writer of this volume has dealt with these embarrassments as well as he could. As to the first, interpreting in a liberal way his commission “to write a story for the young,” he has tried to adapt his chapters to those in the later stages of youth,—to those, indeed, already standing upon the threshold of maturity. Prominence has been given to the more picturesque and dramatic features of the record. The profundities are only touched upon; the

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mysteries of the Cabala, and the inspiration that may lie within the fantastic rhapsodizing of the Talmudists, no attempt has been made to fathom. At the same time, there has been no effort to dwarf and emasculate the absorbing account into the dimensions of a proper "juvenile." Here are details of exterminating warfare, of sharpest torture, of bitterest cursing. Here are presented sages as they study the darkest problems,—poets, as they thrill the human heart-strings with marvellous, subtle power;—characters shining in the very beauty of holiness,—characters, too, black with malignity most appalling. All this stands in the record: to present Israel faithfully, these traits must be given, and the attempt has been made to present Israel faithfully. A tale, it is, full of thrilling fascination and fruitful in instruction; a tale, however, that sobers and that requires soberness in its readers,—the ripeness which comes when childhood has been left behind.

As regards the second embarrassment, it will be at once apparent to the reader that the writer feels that Israel, among the nations, should be regarded with reverence, even with awe, in times modern as well as ancient. In what sense the Hebrews are the chosen people of God,—whether the special protection of Heaven supposed to be extended in ancient times has lasted to the present hour,—whether the sufferings of the race for eighteen centuries are due to the crime committed upon Calvary,—these are questions to which an answer has not been attempted. Among the ancient traditions—whether Heliodorus was driven away from the Temple treasures by Heaven-

sent messengers; whether David heard the voice of God in the rustling of the balsam-trees; whether the sun and moon stood still at Joshua's command, or the angel of the Lord really smote the host of Sennacherib,—such legends as these are given as they stand, with no effort to separate the nucleus of reality from the accretions of fable. The writer cannot hope to escape the condemnation of some critics, perhaps of all. The Supernaturalist will probably find him too indifferent to the miraculous; the Rationalist, too lenient toward ancient superstitions; the Jew, not sufficiently cognizant of the divine mission of Israel upon the earth. The writer can only trust that while dealing with subjects in which the feelings of multitudes are so deeply enlisted and on such opposite sides, he may at least escape the charge of flippancy and irreverence. While the account in the case of many a comparatively insignificant figure is given with considerable detail, the narrative of the Gospels is presented only in outline. That tale, the possession as it is of every memory, it has been thought unnecessary to give with fulness. At the same time it will be evident, it is hoped, that the figure of Jesus has been regarded as possessing sublime, overshadowing importance among those who have come forth from Israel.

As to authorities, the foot-notes must be consulted. The effort has been made to become acquainted with every thing of value contained in our tongue, but the French and the Germans have worked this mine far more thoroughly. In particular, use has been made of the great work of Graetz, "Geschichte des Juden-

thums," and of the work of Reinach, "Histoire des Israélites depuis leur Dispersion jusqu' à nos Jours," which appeared in Paris just in time to be made available for this book. Many a picturesque passage has been derived from Heinrich Heine, an apostate from Israel, whose soul, however, always yearned toward the mother whom he had spurned. The vivid portrayal of the circumstances of mediæval Jewish life, given in chapter XI., is an adaptation from his incomplete novel, "The Rabbi of Bacharach," combined with facts derived from Graetz. It enters with profound sympathy and thorough learning into the atmosphere that surrounded the persecuted Hebrews of that sombre time.

In conclusion, while acknowledging obligation to many helpers, the writer desires in a special way to thank Rabbi S. H. Sonnenschein, of St. Louis, and Dr. Abraham S. Isaacs, of the *Jewish Messenger*, of New York, for suggestions and books, which have been of great value to him in his work.

J. K. H.

ST. LOUIS, November, 1885.





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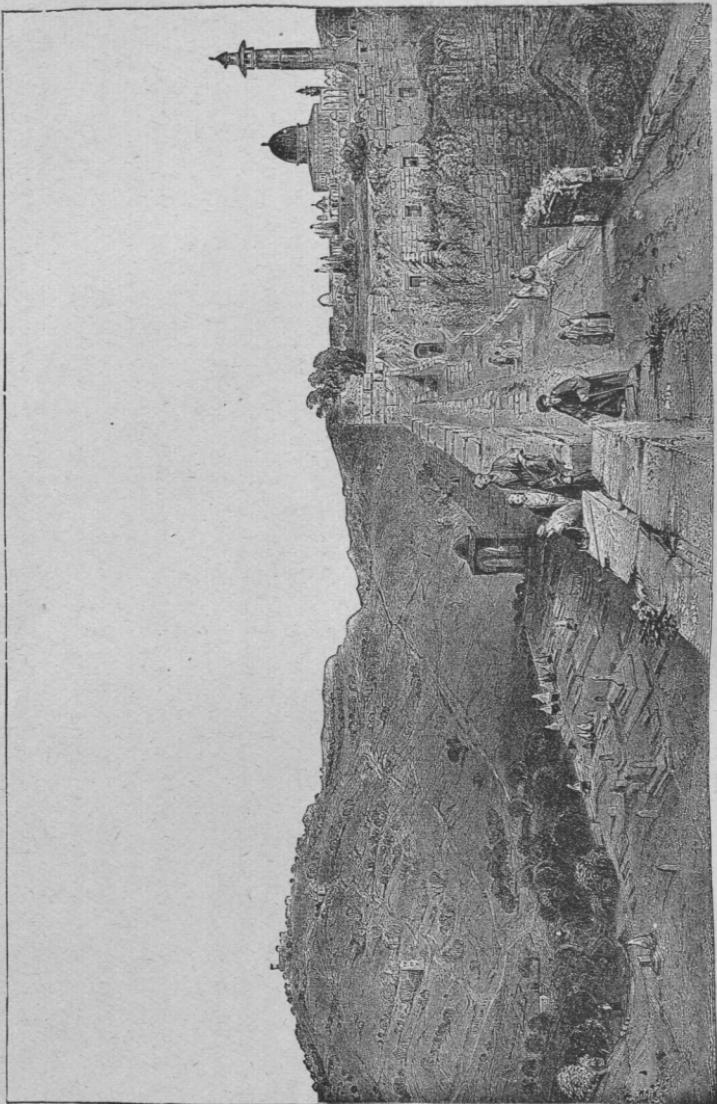
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MOUNT OF OLIVES FROM THE WALL.





PART I.

THE ANCIENT PRIDE.

" If any reference is made to the Jews, some hearer is sure to state that she, for her part, is not fond of them, having known a Mr. Jacobson who was very unpleasant ; or that he, for his part, thinks meanly of them as a race, though, on inquiry, you find he is little acquainted with their characteristics. A people with Oriental sunlight in their blood, they have a force which enables them to carry off the best prizes. A significant indication of their natural rank is seen in the fact that, at this moment, the leader of the Liberal party in Germany is a Jew, the leader of the Republican party in France is a Jew, and the head of the Conservative ministry in England is a Jew. Tortured, flogged, spit upon,—their name flung at them as an opprobrium by superstition, hatred, and contempt,—how proud they have remained ! " — GEORGE ELIOT (" Impressions of Theophrastus Such ").



THE STORY OF THE JEWS.

CHAPTER I.

WHY THE STORY OF THE JEWS IS PICTURESQUE.

IN the fiftieth Psalm stands the passage: "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined." If we understand the word Zion in this sentence to mean, as it is often explained, the Hebrew nation, we find here an enthusiastic utterance by a Jewish poet of his sense of pride in his race: the Hebrew people is chosen out from among the nations of the earth to exhibit the perfection of beauty,—is, in fact, an outshining of God himself upon the world.

What is to be said of such a declaration? If it were made concerning any other race than the Jewish, it would be scouted and ridiculed as arrogance pushed into impiety, a claim not to be tolerated even in the most impassioned poetry. Can the world bear the assertion any better when it is made concerning the Jews? Such claims, at any rate, the Jews have always made. Declarations of Israelitish greatness scarcely less strong than that of the Psalmist, can be found in the writings of our contemporaries. Says a rabbi of Cincinnati in a book

published within a few years: "Had the Hebrews not been disturbed in their progress a thousand and more years ago, they would have solved all the great problems of civilization which are being solved now." The Earl of Beaconsfield, glorying in his Jewish blood, was accustomed to maintain, without qualification, the indomitable superiority of the Hebrews over the most powerful modern races, and alleged that in an intellectual sense they had conquered modern Europe. In the immense extent of time which stretches from the singer of the Psalms to the Cincinnati rabbi and the marvellous Jew who, a few years ago, superintended the management of the greatest empire of the earth, there is no age in which Israelites have not uttered just as confidently their conviction of Jewish supremacy.

In what way are we who are without trace of Semitic blood to treat these claims of our Hebrew neighbors? In the Christian world it has been customary, as far as the assertions of superiority relate to antiquity, to concede every thing. It is part of the Christian faith, in fact, to believe that the Jews were the chosen people of God, selected from among the races of the earth to be the subjects of a special covenant, guided through ages by successive supernatural revelations from Heaven, their history set with miracles, their poets inspired prophets, the royal house of David at length giving birth to a child in whom the Deity himself became flesh and dwelt with men. Here, however, the Christian pauses. The incarnate God was rejected by the very people among whom he chose to appear. They

should have adored ; they preferred to crucify. In penalty for this they have undergone for eighteen centuries the most unexampled punishment,—suffering and humiliation not less extreme than their previous exaltation. Such is the sentence imposed upon them by inexorable justice as a penalty for the worst of crimes.

But not all are Christian believers, even in countries nominally Christian. We find, besides, a class whom for convenience' sake we may designate as rationalists, and what treatment will Jewish assertions of supremacy receive from these? Even though we should deny all the supernatural claims made in behalf of the Hebrews, there is still much reason for holding them to be an extraordinary people. Not for numbers certainly, for at no time have they been numerous; not for the extent of their territorial dominion, for their empire, even in the days of its greatest extension, covered only a tract which afterwards formed but a small part of the successive empires of Macedonian, Roman, and Turk. But how wonderful in words—how wonderful in deeds! Even if we should reject the idea of divine inspiration, how extraordinary is the ancient literature of the race! In originality, poetic strength, and religious importance, it surpasses that of all other nations. The old Hebrew writers seldom employ their genius upon any trifling matter, but occupy themselves with the most momentous questions of life; as if, persuaded that God himself had dignified the characters of their language by tracing them with his finger upon tablets of stone, they dared not em-

ploy an alphabet so consecrated upon any frivolous theme.

Give a comprehensive glance at the career of the Jews. It is the marvel of history that this little people, beset and despised by all the earth for ages, maintains its solidarity unimpaired. Unique among all the peoples of the earth, it has come undoubtedly to the present day from the most distant antiquity. Forty, perhaps fifty, centuries rest upon this venerable cotemporary of Egypt, Chaldea, and Troy. The Hebrew defied the Pharaohs; with the sword of Gideon he smote the Midianite; in Jephthah, the children of Ammon. The purple chariot-bands of Assyria went back from his gates humbled and diminished. Babylon, indeed, tore him from his ancient seats and led him captive by strange waters, but not long. He had fastened his love upon the heights of Zion, and like an elastic cord, that love broke not, but only drew with the more force as the distance became great. When the grasp of the captor weakened, that cord, uninjured from its long tension, drew back the Hebrew to his former home. He saw the Hellenic flower bud, bloom, and wither upon the soil of Greece. He saw the wolf of Rome suckled on the banks of the Tiber, then prowl, ravenous for dominion, to the ends of the earth, until paralysis and death laid hold upon its savage sinews. At last Israel was scattered over the length and breadth of the earth. In every kingdom of the modern world there has been a Jewish element. There are Hebrew clans in China, on the steppes of Central Asia, in the desert heart of Africa. The most powerful

races have not been able to assimilate them,—the bitterest persecution, so far from exterminating them, has not eradicated a single characteristic. In mental and moral traits, in form and feature, even, the Jew to-day is the same as when Jerusalem was the peer of Tyre and Babylon. In the greedy energy of the Jewish trader smoulders something of the old fire of the Maccabees. Abraham and Mordecai stand out upon the sculptures of Nineveh marked by the same eye and beard, the same nose and jaw by which we just now recognized their descendants. Language, literature, customs, traditions, traits of character,—these, too, have all survived. The Jew of New York, Chicago, St. Louis, is, in body and soul, the Jew of London, of St. Petersburg, of Constantinople, of the fenced cities of Judah in the days of David. There is no other case of a nation dispersed in all parts of the world and yet remaining a nation. Says Mr. E. A. Freeman: "They are very nearly, if not absolutely, a pure race in a sense in which no other human race is pure. Their blood has been untouched by conversion, even by intermarriage." It is an asbestos, which no fire of hate or love has been hot enough to consume. Many a Jew still looks to the old home of his race with affection abated by no single particle, and anticipates a joyful time when the throne of Jacob shall again be established upon Zion. They cling with startling tenacity to every element of nationality. Their history is like a great bear-baiting, in which every nation has figured among the bull-dogs, but with bite after bite of outrage and contumely, all have not been able to drive the life out of their Judæan prey.

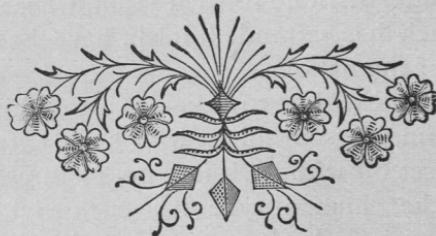
Who will deny to the Jews pre-eminent force of passion and intellect in the most various directions? The skilful writer of fiction to-day, who depicts a Jewish personage, feels that at any rate the character must be made intense. A weak Jew would be the greatest contradiction of probability. Whether he loves or hates, he must go to extremes. We instinctively feel that no object is so cherished as that toward which the affection of the Jew is turned, whether it be parent or child, wife or friend. How Isaac of York in "Ivanhoe" defies the torturers as he thinks of Rebecca! How burning the charity of Nathan in the masterpiece of Lessing! What strange persistent ardor in Mordecai pouring inspiration into the soul of Daniel Deronda!

Nor does the world see elsewhere perhaps such capacity for malevolence. What scorn and scowl has the Hebrew had for the rest of the earth! The land which fell especially under his malediction, like Samaria, if human maledictions could blast, would have found the grass withering in its fields, and the water in its bosom. Perhaps avarice never wears its most hideous aspect except in the soul of the Jew. The pursuit to which oppression for ages restricted him, has exposed him peculiarly to be the prey of this vice. In the popular idea, the Jew is the embodiment of covetousness, and perhaps into no other soul does the love of gain eat with such bitter and deep corrosion; Fagin and Shylock are types as artistic as they are tremendous. Bad passions rage most violently in strong souls, as certain fevers are said to display their full force only in vigorous physical frames.

But not in the direction of earthly love or hate, of avarice or patriotism, has the force of the Hebrew nature exerted itself most strikingly. When it has been directed toward heavenly objects, it has constituted the most fervent piety which the world has ever seen. Those majestic prophets of old are counterparts of their countrymen to-day, only in them the national force shot strongly upward. They grasped heavenly things so vividly that even their bodily senses seemed to lay hold of God and angels. Spiritual presences faced the bodily sight in wilderness or burning bush, or above the ark of the covenant. The earthly ear caught tones from the other world in some still small voice, or pealing from a bare mountain peak. And here it is that the Jew has accomplished his most extraordinary achievement. His faith furnished the stock upon which Mahomet grafted the creed of Islam,—upon which one mightier than he fixed a scion, whose leaves, as the branch has extended itself, have been for the healing of the nations.

So stands the Jew to-day—his astonishing history behind him, his soul alight with such extraordinary fire, and set off with such intense, picturesque traits. What other human type has such vividness and color! It is not altogether surprising arrogance then when the Jew lays claim to a remarkable eminence. The Christian and the rationalist, on different grounds to be sure, are ready to say that there has been nothing in the world so wonderful as the career of the Israelitish nation. Certainly no intelligent man can fail to see with Freeman that the

phenomenon of the Jewish race is one of the strangest in history. The more it is thought of, the more its utter strangeness appears—that its position is completely unique. To attempt some sketch of the progress of this people during its long history, to depict its ancient state, to sketch the depth of humiliation through which it has been forced to pass, and the signs that can now be discerned that it is about to issue into a time of extraordinary triumph,—this certainly is a theme of interest.





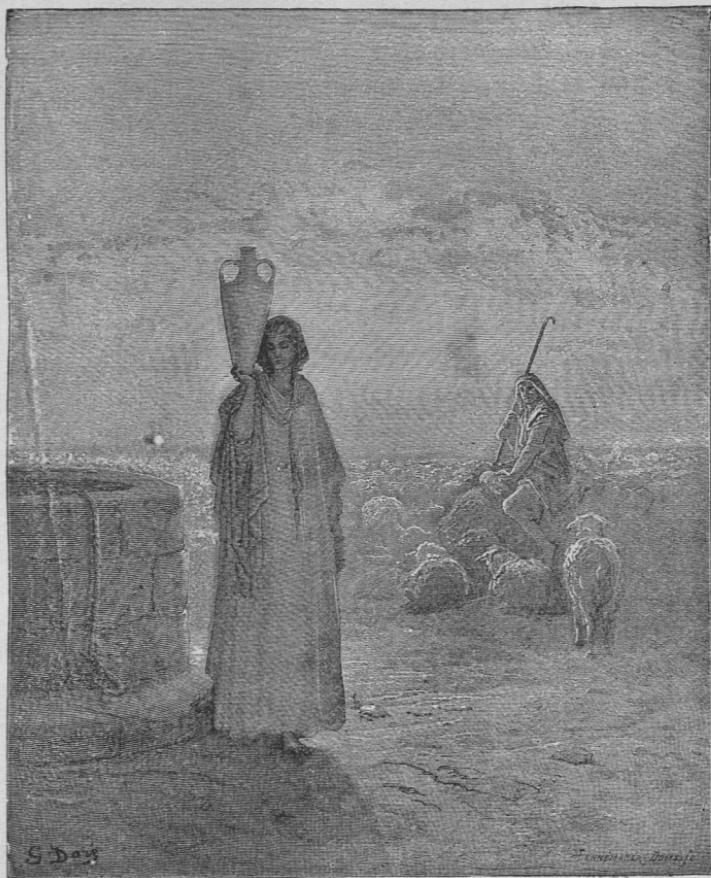
CHAPTER II.

THE MORNING-TIME IN PALESTINE.

THE southwestern corner of Syria, known as Palestine, the Holy Land, is a country small in extent. Its boundaries are somewhat indefinite; for in different ages the power of the Hebrews was extended now over a greater, now over a smaller tract. It was about one sixth as large as England, scarcely larger, in fact, than the State of Massachusetts. From a high mountain peak in the centre, it would be quite easy for an observer in a clear day to behold on every side the most distant limits—to the south the ranges bordering upon Arabia, to the north the summits of Lebanon; the Mediterranean to the west would seem not far distant; so, too, the unproductive steppes into which, on the eastern frontier, the pasture lands are gradually merged. Short as the journey would be between the farthest points, consuming scarcely half a day with our ways of travel, great contrasts of scenery would be encountered. The lofty mountains of Lebanon rise far toward the line of eternal snow, their flanks are covered with forests, the elevated valleys with the vegetation of high latitudes. Passing south from these, while the country remains hilly, fruitful

plains frequently occur, extending to the margin of the western sea. In the south the land wears a look less hospitable; the desert lies close at hand, and already vast wastes of sand are seen, crossed by lines of hills upon which grows no tree or blade of grass. (From the northern uplands a tumultuous river, the Jordan, makes its way in cataracts and rapids to the lower levels. Early in its course it rests in a tranquil expanse of water known anciently as the Lake of Merom. Midway, again, the floods pause in the Sea of Tiberias, also called Gennesereth and Galilee. At last, in the south, the turbulent stream cuts its way deep through the land to lose itself in a gloomy lake, sunk far beneath the level of the ocean, whose brackish waters and sulphurous shores have caused it to be called the Dead Sea.)

Palestine is still, in parts, a beautiful land. A traveller arriving at certain seasons of the year from the dreary regions to the south and east, at the rich central fields and green northern valleys, even now might greet it as the land of promise. It is capable of being redeemed in great part to luxuriance. (In ancient times before its resources had become wasted and when it was held by free and thrifty tribes, it is easy to understand how it could be said to flow with milk and honey.) In the harvest time great tracts, no doubt, waved with corn. (Up the sunny slopes, in terrace over terrace, smiled the vineyards. Olive forests everywhere bore rich burdens of fruit. Groves of palm rose where in the lowlands the breath of the south could be fully felt; while the high ledges of the northern hills were fringed



JACOB AND RACHEL.

with mighty cedars.) There were abundant pastures white with flocks; there were balm-fields on the plain of Sharon; in Bashan was the lowing of innumerable herds; the grapes of Eshcol ripened into such clusters that even the shoulders of strong men found them a heavy burden. This land of promise the children of Israel at length, after a severe struggle, possessed, and for many centuries it continued to be their home.

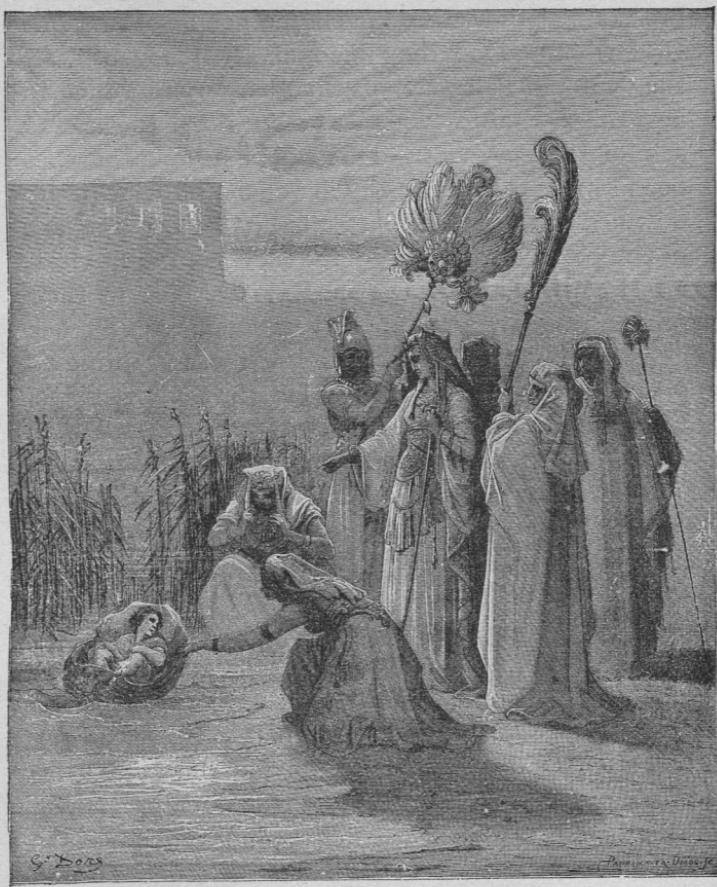
The Israelites, Hebrews, or Jews, as the race is indifferently called, belong to the great Semitic branch of the human family, long believed to be descended from the eldest son of Noah, Shem. (Since the lapse of time which we have to consider is so vast, much of the history of the Hebrews must be passed over in most rapid review.) If we date the origin of the Jews at the time when Abram went southward from Haran, we are taken back to a most remote past. As the mists of the morning time arise, a group of allied tribes, Moabites, Edomites, Ammonites, and Israelites, may be descried in Southern Palestine, of which group the Israelites are found in the territory extending westward. About 1500 B.C. we can trace the Israelites in Goshen, fertile pasture lands in northern Egypt, where they acknowledge the dominion of the Pharaohs, but retain their own manners and institutions.) The patriarchs Isaac and Jacob have played their part. Joseph, sold into bondage, has found favor in the eyes of the splendid monarch. Mindful of his brethren, he withdraws them from the outer desert and gives



JOSEPH INTERPRETING PHARAOH'S DREAM.

them pleasant seats in the plain watered by the beautiful river, where instead of the famine which has constantly threatened them, they enjoy a perpetual abundance among the Egyptian flesh-pots. At length come darker days. Rulers succeed who forget the hospitality of their predecessors. The Hebrew strangers are reduced to slavery, in which state they languish, until beneath the blow of Moses the Egyptian task-master is smitten to the earth. The bold rebel develops presently into a national champion and leader, to whom the oppressed people surrender their hearts. The Red Sea is passed and Pharaoh is overwhelmed in the pursuit. The Law is given at Sinai, followed by the long wandering in the desert. Moses, his aged eyes refreshed on Mount Pisgah by the sight of the promised land, goes to his rest in the sepulchre over against Beth-Peor, whose place no man knoweth unto this day; and the people pass into Canaan, finding homes in the south, not far from those of their ancestors, in the days before the sojourn on the Nile.

Up to this time we see in Israel no settled nation. In the day of Moses the old patriarchal system of families and clans prevailed; the people was an unorganized collection of tribes of the same stock, but not at all closely combined. The authority of Moses came from his success in leading them out of Egypt. He established the holy administration of the Law or *Torâh*, an institution which preceded a formal polity, but at length came to serve as the foundation pillar upon which the state rested. The basis of the unity which prevailed from the earliest



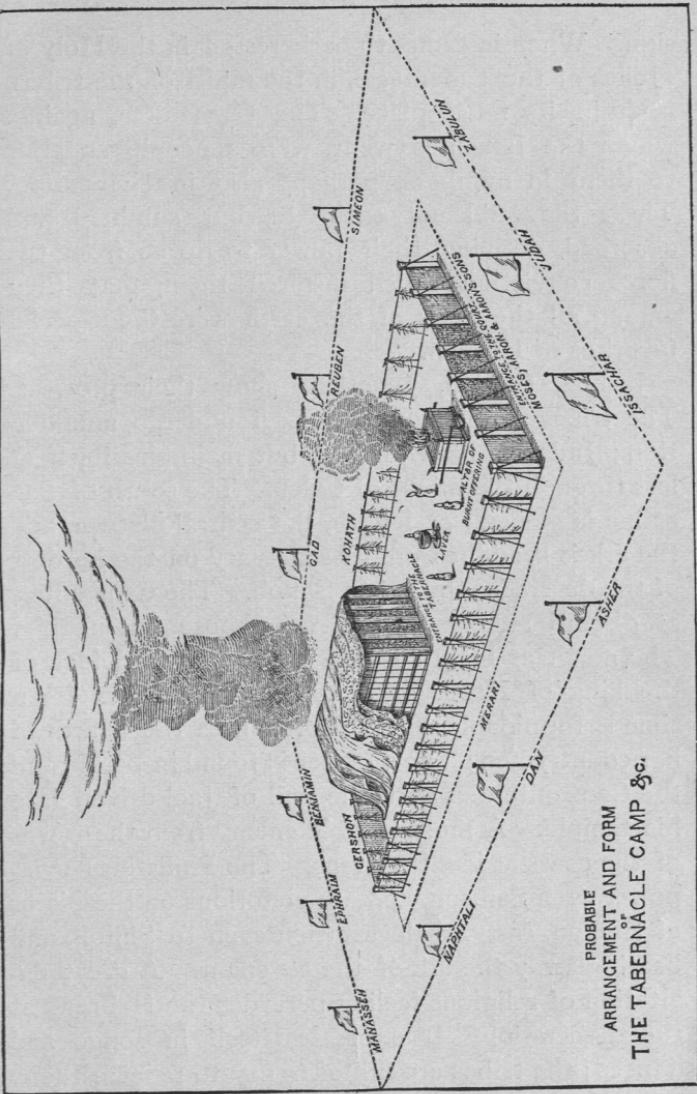
MOSES IN THE BULRUSHES.

times in Israel was an intense conviction in their breasts that they were the chosen people of that one God whom alone they recognized, Jehovah. As they entered Palestine, his sanctuary was established at Kadesh Barnea where usually stood the sacred ark of the covenant. The camp, however, it has been said, was the "smithy in which the tribes were destined to be welded into a nation,"* and the ark of the covenant, carried by the hands of the Levites, was the standard, which the Hebrews bore in their midst as they entered upon their conquests.

According to Josephus, the ark was a shrine of precious wood, five spans in length, three spans in breadth, and three in height. It was covered with gold; both within and without, so that the wooden part was not seen. A lid united to the side by golden hinges closed the casket; in each side were fastened two golden rings, through which gilded bars were passed, that it might be borne upon the shoulders of the priests. Upon the cover were two cherubim, flying creatures, their form not like to any of the creatures which men have seen, though Moses said he had seen such creatures near the throne of God. The ark contained the two tables of stone, brought down from Sinai by Moses, upon which were inscribed the ten commandments. On the march, the tribe of Levi was the especial guard of the ark, which was borne in the centre of the people. On the east proceeded Judah, on the south, Reuben, on the west, Ephraim, on the north, Dan, each tribe beneath the banner marked with its en-

* Wellhausen.

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sign. When in camp, the ark rested in the Holy of Holies of the Tabernacle, in the midst of the tribes, each in its fixed place. The Canaanites, against whom the Israelites went, were a people superior to them in numbers, perhaps also in civilization. These they did not extirpate, but subdued and absorbed, deriving their power to do so from the fierce conviction which inspired them, that they among all the races of the earth were the especial favorites of Heaven.

Joshua, Gideon, Jephthah, show their prowess. The tribes of Simeon and Levi undergo annihilation ; Judah is hard pressed, but maintains itself at last through the might of Caleb. The south of Palestine is gained ; at length, the central plateau, and the ark is brought from its sanctuary on the borders of the desert northward to Shiloh. The Canaanites, at discord among themselves, oppose but feebly. The north at length is laid open by the defeat of the king of Hazor at Lake Merom. Sisera for a time is formidable, but Deborah fires the hearts of her countrymen ; a new leader is found in Barak, and the Canaanite dies with the nail of Jael driven into his temple. A more terrible enemy from the towns of the coast at last threatens. The Philistines overpower even Samson, and are victorious on the plains of Sharon, carrying devastation even to Shiloh, and bearing away the ark of the covenant. A great exaltation of religious feeling pervades the Hebrews at the desecration. It expresses itself in songs and dances ; the tribes are full of frenzy to redeem themselves from such humiliation. Through the proph-

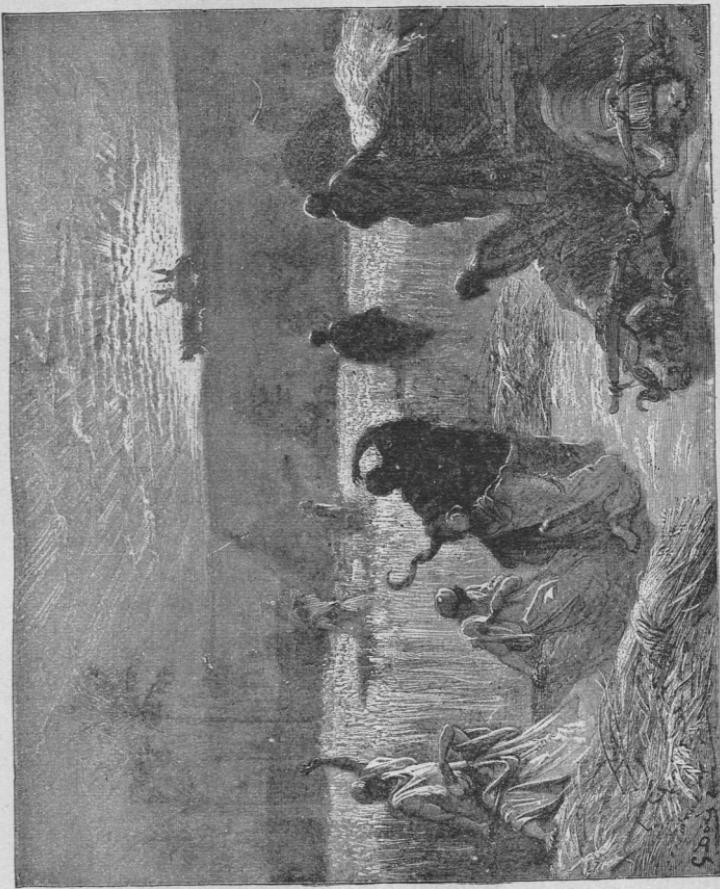


THE SETTING UP OF THE TABERNACLE

et Samuel, the champion Saul is discovered. A giant in form, and of a fiery disposition, he wins victory, and is anointed king in the ancient camp of Joshua at Gilgal. Jonathan, his son, assisted by his armor-bearer only, drives the Philistines into retreat. But a greater leader is at hand. A smooth stone from the sling of a Hebrew youth smites in the forehead the giant of Gath, and David stands revealed.

Through him the foes from the coast are beaten and humbled. The ark is brought back, to the joy of the people. The Lord stands on the side of Israel. David hears him in the rustling of the leaves of the balsam-trees, close at his hand. One of the Hebrew captains brandishes his spear over eight hundred slaughtered foes; another wields his sword until his hand grows rigid about the hilt and cannot be unclasped. "The king was in an hold and garrison of the Philistines, and longed and said: 'Oh, that one would give me a drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!'" Then three mighty men, Adino, Eleazar, and Shammah, brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem that was by the gate, and took it and brought it to David. Then the king would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the Lord, saying: "Is not this as it were the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives?" Thus, in undoubting confidence that Jehovah is with them, the Hebrews, with valiant deeds and great sacrifices, fight on. The country to the north is to a large extent subjected. The mountain fortress of the Jebusites is seized, destined to become

THE RETURN OF THE ARK.



Jerusalem, the most famous city of the world. Moab, Ammon, and Edom, to the south and east, are subdued; the recovered ark finds a new sanctuary upon Mt. Zion; the Hebrew power is at its height.

With the close of David's career, a period was reached when the character of the Hebrews underwent a certain change. Up to that time their hold upon Palestine had been precarious; each Israelite had been compelled to be a soldier, prepared by force of arms to resist opposition in every quarter. With Canaan subjugated, however, a time had come for attention to the arts of peace. The woodmen upon Lebanon felled timber for the architects, who built new cities as the people multiplied. The waters of Merom and Galilee yielded a harvest to the fishermen. The vineyards flourished, the broad corn-fields upon the plains were tilled by hands that had turned the sword into the plough-share. An unwholesome contagion, moreover, from luxurious neighbors on the borders began to sap the ancient Hebrew vigor, and a dangerous tolerance came to be shown toward the strange gods of the Gentiles. In these times were heard in the land the voices of the prophets, men who were believed to receive into their souls special messages from Jehovah; their venerable forms, on the mountain-side, in the market-place, on the highroad, now stimulated the indifferent, now denounced apostates, now threatened coming woe to the degenerate.

The magnificent Solomon, loving peace better than war, organized the great districts which David had subdued, and maintained a gorgeous court. To

extend and embellish Jerusalem lay near his heart, and, in accomplishing this, he indulged to the full a strong passion for architecture. He constructed a vast citadel, in the midst of which rose the walls of the Temple. The Temple of Solomon! Of all edifices reared by human hands, there is no other that has interested such multitudes. Solomon began to build it in the fourth year of his reign, about 1010 B.C., employing preparations which had already been made by David. In return for the corn, oil, and wine, which fertile Palestine produced abundantly, he obtained from Hiram, King of Tyre, skilled workmen and precious materials. The Temple's utmost height was two hundred feet, built up from deep foundations, with colossal masonry and great beams of cedar from Lebanon. The stones were so laid "that there appeared to the spectator no sign of the hammer, but as if all had naturally united themselves together."* Plates of gold were so nailed upon the surfaces that the whole Temple shone. Doors of cedar overlaid with gold afforded entrance, and before these hung veils of blue, purple, and scarlet of the brightest and softest linen, wrought with curious flowers. The deepest recesses of the Temple contained the Holy of Holies. This enclosed two cherubim of gold of fifteen feet in height, whose outstretched wings, reaching to the right and left, the northern and southern walls, touched one another, also, in the centre, and so formed a covering for the ark, which was placed between them; but nobody can tell, or even conjecture, what was the

* Josephus.

shape of these cherubim. In the chamber adjoining the Most Holy Place, stood the altar of incense, made of cedar, covered with gold, and also a great number of candlesticks, one of which was always lighted. Upon a multitude of tables were put many thousand vessels of gold and silver; but upon the largest was set forth the shew-bread, lawful to eat for the priests alone.

In the court before the Temple stood the brazen altar upon which sacrifices were offered, and the vast basin called the sea of brass, which rested on the backs of twelve brazen oxen, and held water for the ablutions of the priests before the sacrifice. To the right and left of the porch rose to the height of thirty feet two pillars of hollow brass. Their circumference was twenty feet, and the metal of four finger-breadths in thickness. The Tyrian workmen embossed upon them the forms of lilies and palms, and two hundred pomegranates in two rows; the pillar to the right bore the name Jachin, and that to the left the name Boaz.

The splendid details of the Temple are described by Josephus, and also in the books of Kings and Chronicles, and there is no reason to doubt the substantial correctness of the descriptions. Seven years were consumed in its erection, and when all was done the people far and near were gathered together for a solemn dedication. The king himself, with the Levites, went before, rendering the ground moist with oblations, and so filling the air with incense that it touched the senses even of those who were far off. Neither king nor people grew weary of sing-

ing hymns or dancing ; but as the priests approached, who bore upon their shoulders the ark, the multitude gave way. The ark held, as of old, nought besides the two tables of stone, upon which the finger of Jehovah was believed to have inscribed the ten commandments. It was set reverently beneath the golden wings of the cherubim, and near at hand were put the seven-branched candlestick and the golden altar. As the priests went forth, after setting all in order, it is related that a thick cloud spread itself after a gentle manner within the Temple, so darkening the place that one priest could not see another. A fire, moreover, came running out of the air, and, rushing npon the altar in the sight of all, it consumed speedily the sacrifices that were placed thereon. It was believed that Jehovah thus gladly pitched his tabernacle within the Temple, and signified his pleasure in the victims that were offered.

Thus Jerusalem became beautiful, and the fame of the wisdom and magnificence of Solomon spread throughout the world. But the vigor of David's rule was sadly missed. A Syrian kingdom was allowed to establish itself undisturbed at Damascus to the northward, and turbulent Edom in the south became again independent. The wisdom of Solomon became the worst folly. When he died at length, the simplicity and discipline of the earlier Hebrews were becoming sadly relaxed, and a way was prepared for heavy calamities in the future.

Great discords came to prevail. The nation of the Hebrews was split into two divisions, Judah at the south with Jerusalem for the capital, and Israel at

the north with the new city of Samaria as the seat of its kings. The two kingdoms were sometimes in harmony, but often at feud. The purity of the ancient worship, moreover, became commingled with Phoenician and Egyptian elements, against which protested the prophets Elijah and Elisha. In the softening of manners which existed, when agriculture had replaced the ruder life of the shepherd and herdsman, and the spirit of commerce was beginning to prevail, the national force was debilitated, and though huge fortifications surrounded the towns, there was a want of worthy defenders. So speedily did the ancient rugged virtue decay, that even in the time of Rehoboam, the successor of Solomon, Jerusalem was sacked by the Egyptians, who bore away, together with much wealth, the trophies of David. Damascus sent conquering armies to the very gates of Jerusalem. At length approached a most noteworthy crisis: the purple Assyrian invaded the land with chariot and spear.

We have followed already the story of the Jews for more than a thousand years. In the annals from the days of the patriarchs to the period we have now reached, it is often difficult to separate authentic history from legend. With the Assyrians we arrive at an age, however, when the mists of the morning-tme are dissipated and the clearest sunlight prevails. We can well afford here to take a closer look. Within little more than a generation, discoveries have been made which give an extraordinary interest to this part of the ancient history of the Jews, and there is no period in which their characteristics are

more plainly displayed. Of the many foreign nations which play a part in the older Hebrew annals, none is so prominent as Assyria. In the most ancient Hebrew documents we find them mentioned. An antediluvian existence indeed is attributed to the nation in the second chapter of Genesis; but without dwelling upon uncertainties, we find that in the eighth century before Christ, the power of Assyria becomes very conspicuous. The books of Kings and Chronicles are largely concerned with the relation of her conquests. In the expedition of Jonah we have the only instance of a prophet's going to a distance from Judaea to exercise his prophetic functions. Among the more ancient prophets whose writings remain to us, Amos, about 790 B.C., first hints at danger from Assyria. Hosea, soon afterward, is much occupied with the calamities impending from this quarter. Isaiah, later still, from first to last, indicates how great was the pressure upon the Hebrews of this mighty force from the Tigris. Micah, his contemporary, and Nahum, a little after, prophesy only to threaten vengeance upon these terrible foes. Zephaniah, 640 B.C., predicts the destruction of Nineveh, the Assyrian capital; and Ezekiel, in a subsequent generation, after the destruction had been accomplished, describes it at length. The whole population of Israel, the kingdom lying to the northward, is swept away into slavery. At length, 587 B.C., the capital of Judah, Jerusalem itself, is destroyed, and the poor remnant of the Hebrews carried captive to Babylon, which, until shortly before, had been a dependency of Nineveh.

The crisis which we have reached in the story of the Jewish nation is so momentous, our knowledge of the period is so clear, to a large extent gained so recently and in such interesting ways,—that it becomes proper to employ in our narrative greater detail than heretofore.





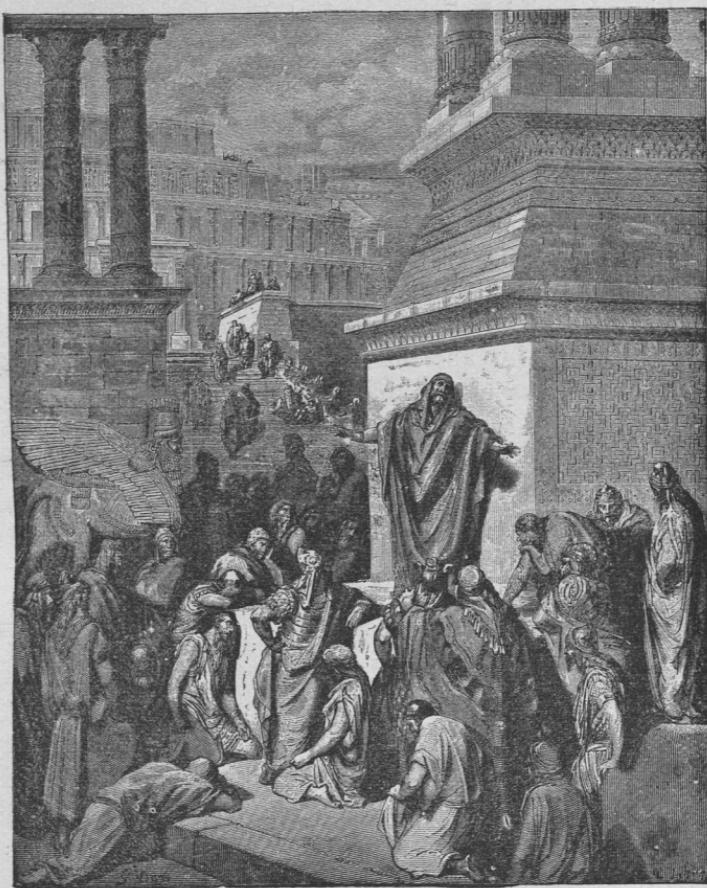
CHAPTER III.

ISRAEL AT NINEVEH.

AN old Greek historian, Diodorus, relates, that when Semiramis, the Assyrian queen, had subdued many nations, loaded with spoil she broke into Ethiopia. There she came upon a wonderful lake, whose waters were vermillion in color, and of a sweet flavor like that of old wine. Whoever tasted it became mad and confessed his misdeeds. The intellect of the modern world, after adding to her empire realm after realm of knowledge, has invaded, with arms strengthened by her conquests, the domain of ancient history. Suddenly before her stretches a shining lake. Hitherto of its waters she has known nothing, except as an old annalist or poet, here and there, has preserved in his vase a few glittering drops. But now the full expanse begins to spread itself before her, rich with gorgeous tints and flashing light. She grows dizzy over the spectacle, and is disposed to recall many of her boastful claims to superior power and knowledge.

In the great halls of the British Museum none are more impressive than those which contain the vast collections made by Layard among the ruins of Nineveh. Against the walls are ranged sculptured slabs, dingy

with the discolorations of 2,500 years. Upon these tower the figures, bearded, colossal, just as they were cut by the Assyrian sculptors. One may touch the chiselling of the winged creatures, or the muscles that stand out so strangely from the gigantic limbs, or the flowing robes or locks, thinking, as the fingers pass along the groove in which worked the tool of the old artist, how many and how mighty the events have been since the stone was thus wrought. Greece has risen and gone to decay; so Rome, and so a score of empires. As strange and quiet as they stand now, rose those figures, when the prophets of Israel, in the very same palaces and temples in which the sculptures formerly stood, spoke their messages. Some of the carvings represent the very kings and soldiers of whose deeds we read in the Bible, under whose chariot-wheels the people of Judæa were again and again crushed. The slabs line the walls, and in the centre of the halls are colossal sculptured figures —lions with wings and human heads—figures sitting and standing — representations of kings heavily bearded, with faces of power, the very monarchs in whose presence the prophets spoke, and whose armies destroyed the towns of the Jews. In the presence of relics so very wonderful, it can hardly be otherwise than that the heart beats quick. As the modern visitor passes through the solemn halls, his shadow falls athwart the giant sculptures, as the shadow of Jonah once fell. Standing at one end and glancing backward, the sculptures so uncouth, yet so marvellously majestic, loom in that dim London atmosphere preternaturally large, so that to the figures is imparted an air of weird enchantment.



JONAH CALLING NINEVEH TO REPENTANCE.

Let us try to gain a clear idea of that indomitable force and pride—that extraordinary confidence in himself—which have marked the Jew everywhere, from the earliest history to the latest, and which are among the most important causes of the vitality and solidarity of the race. We shall appreciate it most vividly perhaps if we get at it by means of a sidelight. We wish to understand their ancient force; let us understand the force and splendor of that which they confronted unabashed, which overwhelmed them utterly and yet did not smother them. Let us behold a picture of one enemy whom the Jew in his ancient day was compelled to meet, by whom, for a time, he was overborne, whom, however, he has survived for many ages.

“Assyrians,” says Ezekiel, “captains and rulers clothed most gorgeously, horsemen riding upon horses, girded with girdles upon their loins, exceeding in dyed attire upon their heads, all of them princes to look to.” Brilliant though the Assyrians were, mighty and gorgeous though the empire was which they established, men felt until a generation since that all authentic knowledge of them had been lost. But little correct information was to be obtained except from the books of the Old Testament, and there the mention of Assyria, though abundant, as has been seen, was scarcely coherent or trustworthy. This scriptural mention was enough to stimulate curiosity, but not to gratify it; the same can be said of the accounts of the Greek historians Ctesias, Diodorus Siculus, and Herodotus, from whom it has been possible to glean here and there only a shred or a patch

with which scholars have tried to piece out the scanty story.

But did this mighty race live and die and leave no records of its own? By no means. It has left behind whole libraries of records. The oldest nations, with the chisel, or the brush dipped in indelible colors, wrote down upon tablets of rock, or upon the walls of their buildings, all that they knew. Upon such indestructible pages were inscribed their history, their knowledge of the arts and sciences, their philosophy and poetry. A house was something more to an Egyptian or a Ninevite than a mere place to dwell in; it was a book as well. The libraries were the towns and cities, crowded with volumes large and small, from the pyramid and temple down to the humble home of the laborer. Some were bare and plain, where poverty had time and means to cut only a few characters or paint a line or two. Others were crowded with inscriptions from base to cornice, the tracery most elaborately wrought, and often illuminated from end to end with the most brilliant hues. Everywhere, in the square, on the palace-front, on both sides of the way, the whole lore of the world was so displayed that he who ran might read.

To this day moth and mildew have continued to spare these old libraries. Thebes and Baalbec, Memphis and Babylon, half covered in sand or overgrown with brambles, still preserve on their solemn walls the memorials of their founders. The traveller hears the lonely desert wind sweep by him; the wild beast is scared from his desert lair at the unusual sound of a human foot-fall, but there in the desola-

tion stands the record, sometimes as distinct as if each century, instead of obliterating, had been an Old Mortality, to deepen the chiselling, or had come with a brush to renew the splendor of the tints. One may read of the whole life of human beings, three thousand years ago; of long-lost arts, which modern civilization has not grasped; of empires whose memory is fast disappearing under the accumulating years, as their ruins have been buried under the drifting sands of the waste; of Nimrod and Sesostris, and many a forgotten hero.

Such was the record which the Assyrians left behind. They cut and stamped their history not only into their buildings, but also into the rocks and mountains. If we were Assyrians we should take perhaps Kenesaw Mountain, smooth a side of it into a precipice with an overhanging ledge, then, underneath, carve in colossal dimensions the figure of the soldier who won the battle there, and the whole story of the march to the sea. At Richmond would rise an immense pyramid, sculptured from base to summit with the achievements of Grant; while at Washington would stand a palace containing a few miles of halls lined with pictured slabs to tell the story of the administration of Lincoln.

If the record was so elaborate, the natural question is, why has it not endured? Sculptured cliff and obelisk have indeed remained in sight, but in solitudes where the eye of civilized man has rarely beheld them. Temple and palace have been buried from sight by the dust of the accumulating centuries. The site of the grave of all the buried splendor

had almost been forgotten, when the 19th century at length resolved upon a resuscitation and wrought out a wonderful result. The discoveries have been made in Western Asia, in a half-desert region remote from the way of commerce. A few miserable Turkish cities in the last stages of decay are situated within the territory, but it is resigned for the most part to the wild Arabs. Everywhere over the surface of the ground there are scattered relics—now a mound or wall—now a heap of sculptured stone—here a space paved with inscribed bricks or pieces of pottery—there a crumbling tower. Desert, though it is at present, there is hardly a portion of the earth that has such historical interest. It was the seat of the Saracens, whose Caliphs, celebrated in the "Arabian Nights," shone at Bagdad until their fragile state was shattered by the Tartars. The apostate Julian came here to die, the old Pagan splendor of Rome shooting forth its last ray from his glazing eye as he falls. Earlier still, this earth felt the heavy soldiery tramp of Xenophon and the ten thousand, of whom the school-boy reads in the *Anabasis*, and the chariot-wheels of the Persians who swept after them. In yet older times than these, here came the Pharaohs as conquerors, and here prophets from Israel thundered forth the messages of the Lord.

From an early period the antiquities of Babylonia and the region lying farther to the eastward have been recognized as the remains of Nineveh and Babylon. In Strabo and Pliny mention is made of the ruins, as also in the books of travellers belonging to the middle ages of our own era. Of the modern

explorers, Niebuhr may be regarded as the pioneer, who visited the localities a century ago. In the decade from 1840 to 1850, the famous archæologists, Botta and Layard, at length, startled the world with a marvellous uncovering. But the possession of these long-buried treasures would be of comparatively little value, were it not for a contemporaneous discovery. The palaces and temples into which Botta and Layard penetrated, contain upon their vast walls innumerable sculptured slabs, in which the figures and scenes are accompanied by inscriptions. The characters of which these are composed are combinations of a certain mark resembling a wedge or arrow head, broad at one end and tapering to a point at the other, from which circumstance it has received the name of the arrow-headed, or, more commonly, the cuneiform, wedge-shaped character. Some idea of Assyrian grandeur might have, no doubt, been obtained from the pictorial representations alone, but for any satisfactory knowledge an acquaintance with the cuneiform was necessary. The inscriptions are numerous, being cut not only upon the slabs with the sculptures, but stamped more or less thickly upon almost every brick or article of pottery. Ability to decipher the cuneiform was gained at the very time it was so much needed, and the history of the achievement is a marvellous record of ingenuity and patience. The task cannot yet be regarded as fully accomplished. Modern scholarship is, however, mastering her wedge-shaped tools, and now the last bars are yielding that have so long kept a beautiful captive from the gaze of the world. We

know each year more and more of her robes and gems, her hanging gardens and castles of alabaster, her crimson pomp and mighty sway.

Two thousand years before Christ a powerful empire existed upon this territory, whose inhabitants had acquired the art of working metals, and were so far refined as to make some progress in astronomical knowledge. Shadowy is the history of those old Chaldaeans. They flourished in the world's morning time before the mists had cleared, and a cloud must always hang over them. Through it we discern dimly the moving to and fro of a great people, the tramp of armies, the glare of forges, the majestic figures of sages versed in unknown lore. To this ancient power Assyria succeeded, becoming the most important country of the East perhaps as early as the thirteenth century before Christ. Her kings became constantly more vigorous and aggressive, and at length opened the era of magnificence. Before speaking of their power and state, a word or two must be said as to the nature of the dominion of the Assyrian kings, which will be needed to understand the description which follows. Their occupation was conquest, but the vanquished states, although under a most absolute despotism, were allowed in the earlier periods to retain their nationality, no difference being made in their internal administration. The subjugated potentates retained court and title, but were forced to pay tribute and render certain personal services. Western Asia was at this time densely peopled, and divided into a multitude of petty kingdoms, most of which became

tributaries of Assyria. But the dominion of the Great King, though splendid, was precarious. Any untoward circumstance was sure to bring about revolts, involving often the repeated subjugation of the same state. At a later period, expedients were adopted to repress the tendency to rebellion. Satraps were appointed over conquered nations in place of the kings who were dethroned; and sometimes, where the vanquished were especially dreaded, the whole nation was torn from its home, and driven to remote districts of the empire.

We have no concern with the activity of these warrior-kings, except as it affects Palestine. The record of this comes down to us written on the rock, and has just been restored to the world after an entombment of twenty centuries. In the book of Kings there figure two monarchs of Syria, which lay to the north of Palestine, between the power of Nineveh and the seats of the Jews. We may read on the rock how one, the fierce Ben Hadad, was smitten with a loss of twenty thousand men; and of the fall of Hazael, the other, with his eleven hundred chariots dashed to pieces. The kingdoms of Judah and Israel see coming nearer and nearer the terrible tempest that has been impending for years. Damascus and Syria have fallen, and there is no other intervening height upon which the threatening storm can discharge itself. The prophets Amos and Hosea threaten imminent woes, and at length they come. The tribes of Gad, Manasseh, and Reuben are swept away, and at length, beneath the Assyrian battering-rams, the city of Samaria falls. Three

years the city struggles, mindful of her glory under Jeroboam, when the state of Solomon himself was paralleled. According to the inscriptions on the slabs, the number of families that were driven from Samaria was twenty-seven thousand two hundred and eighty. These are the ten lost tribes of the house of Israel, and one may see them sculptured on slabs like those in London, some going to augment the splendor of Nineveh with unrewarded toil, some to people distant and barren regions far to the east. There is no mistaking the Jewish faces; the same lines mark them which mark the faces of the Abrahams and Mordecais of to-day.

The power and glory of Assyria have now reached the culminating point, Sennacherib succeeds to the throne. He it is of whom it has been written:

“The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming with purple and gold.”

Upon this brilliant period the light of history falls abundantly. Sennacherib, of all the Assyrian kings, most engages the writers of the Old Testament. We find mention of him in profane history, and whole acres, covered with ruins of palaces and temples, attest his grandeur. This grandeur, for a moment let me try to paint, for the Jews have their part in it.

It is eight hundred years before Christ. The good King Hezekiah rules in Judah, whose counsellor is the venerable prophet Isaiah. It is so far back in time that Rome is just being founded by Romulus. Greece is but in the infancy of her glory, and over her unstoried soil, to the music of Dorian flutes, the hardy

Rome

bands of Sparta go marching to their earliest battle-fields. Long centuries must pass before there will be any mention at all of Teuton, Sclave, or Celt, but the Jew, even then, is old upon the earth. The dominion of Assyria stretches to the ocean on the south, and farther west to the middle provinces of Egypt, the lower banks of the Nile being dependencies of the Great King. Northward, the mountain princes to the base of Ararat, and even to the Euxine, bring him tribute. In the East the yoke has at length been fastened upon the neck of the intractable Mede. The Mediterranean washes the western border; Cyprus, lately won by the prowess of an Assyrian king, being the outpost. Nineveh at last has become the metropolis and the most beautiful city of the empire. The territory in its neighborhood, to-day almost a desert, is, at the time of which we write, very fertile. It is intersected by canals, supplied by the Tigris and Euphrates, which grow smaller and smaller as they proceed, and interlace with one another in every direction. Through this arterial system, a double life-giving stream pours into Mesopotamia, refreshing the soil and wafting its vast commerce. On the banks stand machines for irrigation, so that every rood of ground teems with fruitfulness. In the useful arts the Assyrians have made considerable progress. Copper and lead are mined and wrought with skill. Iron is worked in various forms and manufactured into excellent steel. Glass is made of various degrees of fineness, from that fitted for coarse utensils, to the crystal lens through which the lapidary is to trace microscopic

engraving. The potters furnish a variety of ware, from the rude vessel for the use of the captive, to the elegant vase, enamelled and gilded with tasteful designs, intended for the palace of the satrap or the Great King.) The textile fabrics of Assyria have been famous from an early day. In part the materials of their manufacture are produced at home, in part imported from distant lands. Rich stuffs of cotton, wool, and silk come from the looms. Dyes of a brilliancy, perhaps, surpassing any now used by Europeans are employed, and the splendor of the more costly fabrics is still further increased by weaving in threads of gold. The Assyrians are acquainted with many mechanical contrivances,—the roller, the lever, the pulley, the wheel, and, it may be certain, engines now lost. (An art resembling printing was in general use. In most of the structures built of brick, each brick is stamped with the same inscription, consisting often of several words, and sometimes of a series of sentences. The stamping is believed to have been performed by means of a single engraved plate. The process was, therefore, quite similar to modern stereotyping, except that the impression was received upon clay instead of paper.)

Does the reader think, that the Jews are forsaken, as we occupy ourselves in this way with the details of Assyrian industry? It must be remembered that in this time there was no industry but that of slaves, and that a vast multitude of captive Hebrews were already in servitude on the Tigris. The instruments just described were in the hands of enslaved Jews,—the accomplishments narrated were the achievements

of their toil. Our story only follows them into thraldom, as we dwell thus upon the details of Assyrian civilization.

The commerce of Assyria was immense. Mesopotamia was a great mart between the East and the West from immemorial antiquity down to the discovery of the passage around the Cape of Good Hope. Up the Tigris from the Southern Ocean came silk and cotton from India and China, and precious metals from regions unknown. From Southern Arabia, by caravans, came spices and perfumes. The Phoenician cities to the west sent the produce of trading voyages extended even to Britain and the shores of the Baltic. From the mountains on the north great rafts of lumber were floated down upon the Tigris by the winter floods. Fine wool and droves of cattle and horses were sent from the pastures of Armenia and the Syrian uplands.

Concerning the state of the Great King one hardly dares to speak. The reader will think that the "Arabian Nights," or the vagaries of some mad hashish-eater have crept in among the authorities; but only the statements of matter-of-fact modern scholars and artists are followed. We are far removed in all our tastes and institutions from that ancient life. In the blood of the cold Northern races there is no especial passion for splendor; in the strong and civilized nations of the world to-day, any considerable accumulation of power by single individuals, to be exercised without let or hindrance, is impossible. Even in Russia, despotism is hemmed in by many restraints. In Assyria, however, a race of princes of marvellous

energy, possessed to an inordinate degree of that passion for magnificence which has always characterized the Orientals, sat upon the throne. Their immediate subjects, a warlike people, knew no law but the sovereign's will. A long course of victory had put a hundred powerful nations under their absolute control. If the Great King saw fit, and he often did, he could draw from a tributary the last ounce of treasure, or utterly depopulate a vast district to furnish workmen for any given undertaking. It was unmitigated despotism, exercised by a wonderfully vigorous, unscrupulous, and splendor-loving dynasty. Assassination was the only restraint. No wonder the results of such conditions are almost incredible. The Great King sat on his ivory throne, a true Aladdin; and the genii, controlled by his signet-ring, were all the opulent and industrious states of the East. What phantom world could furnish a mightier company?

Viollet le Duc and Fergusson, the historians of architecture, have paralleled in their department the feat of the naturalist, who from a bone or a scale, constructed with exactness, as it was afterwards proved, the form of an extinct animal. From the broken fragments of the palaces, they have constructed their former grandeur. In the midst of the level landscape rose, in the first place, an immense artificial hill. The excavations from which the soil came may still be distinctly traced in depressions and vast swamps. On all sides this elevation was faced with solid masonry, while upon the lofty platform on the summit was built the palace. Fortifications like cliffs rose near

it an hundred feet high, and wide enough for three chariots abreast. At frequent intervals towers shot up to a still loftier elevation. The platform was ascended by a stately stair. The foot of the visitor trod upon slabs carved or inlaid with handsome designs. Sculptured portals, by which stood silent guardians, colossal figures in white alabaster, the forms of men and beasts, winged and of majestic mien, admitted him to the magnificence within. The façade of the palace at its base was covered with graven images. Upward, tier above tier into the blue heavens, ran lines of colonnades, pillars of costly cedar, cornices glittering with gold, capitals blazing with vermillion, and between them voluminous curtains of silk, purple and scarlet, interwoven with threads of gold. The wind from over Media came breathing through these aerial pavilions, and far down to the alabaster lions and the plumed divinities in the court beneath, they whispered of the glory of the Great King. In the interior, stretching for miles, literally for miles, the builder of the palace ranged the illustrated record of his exploits. The inscriptions were deeply cut in the cuneiform character, and parallel with them in scarlet and green, gold and silver, ran the representations of the scenes themselves. There were commemorated the exploits of the chase, the building of palaces, and scenes of feasting. More numerous, however, were the pictures of war, the battle, the siege, the torture, the long procession of captives. In places of honor, the portrait of the monarch himself was set, with his foot upon the neck of some tributary prince or worship-

ping before his gods. Through lion-guarded portals admission was gained to still other halls, lined every-where by the endless record. The mind grows dizzy with the thought of the splendor,—the processions of satraps and eunuchs and tributary kings winding up the stair and pouring in a radiant stream through the halls,—the gold and embroidery,—the ivory and the sumptuous furniture,—the pearls and the hang-ings. Nor let it be supposed it was merely barbaric splendor. In modern times, in Italy, memorials have been discovered of a refined people who were precursors of the Roman power,—delicate vases, and gold and silver chased in forms of grace, for which the beholder finds no word but perfect. The old Etruscan art is believed to-day to have been trans-planted from Assyria. Architecture found in the balconies of Nineveh the beautiful Ionic column. Highest distinction of all, it is believed that sculp-ture, the art of arts,—the white Phidian blossom, so pure and peerless in the chaplet of ancient Greece, budded in the chambers of the Assyrian kings.





CHAPTER IV.

THE DESTRUCTION OF SENNACHERIB.

LET us imagine ourselves, for the moment, viceroys or princes, personages of sufficient dignity to be guests of the mighty Sennacherib, and that we have ascended with him, the possessor of all this pomp, to the carven roof of the towering palace, where stand altars for sacrifice. Hundreds of feet below, the Tigris washes the foundations, and shoots its waters into the artificial channels winding everywhere through the land. From an unfinished temple close at hand comes the hum of uncounted captives, the keen eye and hawk nose of the Jew appearing among them, slaves since the subjugation, in the previous reigns, of Northern Palestine. In the distance, along the river, in gay barges, approaches the train of some subjugated prince bearing offerings. Mesopotamia, as it were in bondage too, bound under the silvery watercourses beneath the eye, as if by an interlacing net, prepares for the master her punctual tribute of corn and wine. The Great King turns his haughty, bearded face to the southward, where the messengers of Hezekiah, King of Judah, approach, bearing thrones and couches. There are camel-trains from Solomon's seaport of Ezion-Gebir with the

wealth of Ophir ; trains, too, from Southern Arabia, laden with spice, frankincense, and myrrh, caravan upon caravan, until all the robber winds of the desert, from rifling their bales, fling perfumes everywhere through the wilderness. Sennacherib turns his face to the east, and in his dark Assyrian eye there is a light as he thinks of the Mede scourged into servitude. Northward rise peaks covered with snow. He calls to mind, perhaps, how as his chariot bands swept past the base of one of them, down upon them, shroud and sepulchre at once, an avalanche swept over their purple pennons. But what mattered it in so great a multitude ! It was a trifle, and the cymbals of the spearmen clashed on loud as ever through the narrow defiles. The Great King looks westward long and thoughtfully. His breast heaves under its covering of gems, and new pride sits in his haughty face. Was it not there, with the dash of the Mediterranean in his ear, that he pressed his foot upon the necks of the great Phoenician princes, lords of the continuous city stretching northward from Acre two hundred miles to Aradus ? Was it not there that the laboring galleys put to sea out from Sidon, to bear even to distant Tarshish, and the still more distant amber-coasts, the fame of his might ? Was it not there, too, that the ships of the rich Tyrian captains swept past him as he sat on his throne ; their mighty oars, in the words of Ezekiel, made of tough oak from Bashan, their planks of fir-trees from Senir, their tall masts cedars of Lebanon, their sails of embroidered linen, the rowers, as they swept the deep, seated upon benches of ivory carved

in his own Nineveh? How, as the pageant rushed through the waters, even the sea threw off its blue that it might assume the purple light of their sides and the glitter of the shields on their prows! By the side of the Great King, upon an altar set about with beryl and chrysolite, burns eternal fire, kindled in Chaldea once by sages who had looked upon the face of Noah. Well may he bow and worship the gods of Asshur, who have set their favored son on such a pinnacle.

It is scarcely possible to make too brilliant the picture. It was a nation not much behind the modern world in many of the useful arts; and in those which contribute to luxury and splendor, the arts among them especially cultivated, they were perhaps far before. The people, whose prowess and magnificence have just been hinted at, the Jew was called to confront, when at its mightiest. It is for us to see how he bore himself. The good King Hezekiah labored to restore the ancient usages and glory of the Jewish nation, whose power had languished since the reign of Solomon. The old polity was restored, and the sceptre of Judah stretched over several of the neighboring countries. At length growing bolder, and relying upon the support of Egypt, Hezekiah dared to throw off the yoke of Assyria, of which he had been a tributary. Presently from his high throne came rushing the insulted sovereign. The passes in the mountains to the north are choked with his host. The waters of the Jordan in its lower course trickle feebly in a diminished stream, so great is the multitude of men and animals who drink at its source.

Samaria is crossed already desolate ; the frontiers of the tribe of Benjamin are invaded, and like trees, one by one isolated and consumed by a flood of lava, city after city is enveloped and crushed by the red and glittering array. Hezekiah strips the very temple of its treasures, giving up the sacred utensils, and tearing from the pillars their heavy golden plates in order to appease Sennacherib; but the imperious monarch is determined to establish the altars of Asshur in the soil of Mt. Zion.

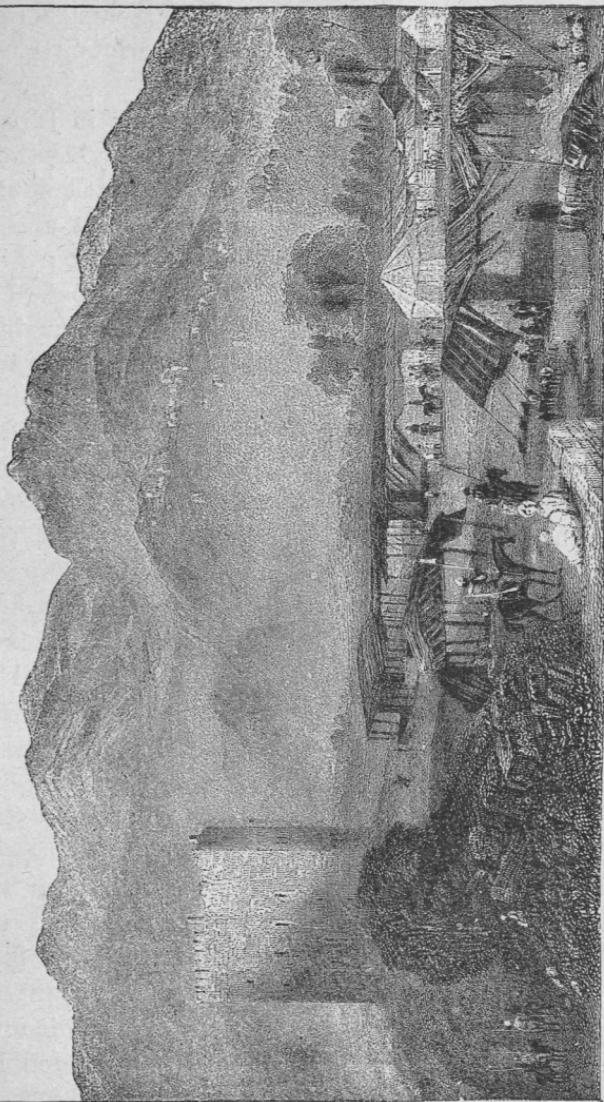
" Like the leaves of the forest when summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen,"—

for the resources of Sennacherib have been stretched to the utmost. When this insignificant handful of Jews has been crushed, there is to be an invasion of Africa. From the sculptures which in our day have come to be an object of study, we may behold in detail the battle order.

The host is in array, for scouts in the van bring tidings of the approach of a hostile army from the southward. The light-armed troops are slingers and archers. They are dressed in short embroidered tunics, with their hair surrounded by bands. Like the Saxon bowmen, the archers draw their arrows to the ear. Their weapons are handsomely decorated. The heavy infantry carry spears and shields ; on their heads they wear helmets of burnished brass ; cross-belts support small-arms at the side, and shining discs of metal cover their breasts. They stand in regular ranks, file behind file. To-morrow, when the host of Judah makes its onset, the first rank kneel-

ing, the second stooping, will form with their spears a bristling hedge, and from behind, the bowmen will discharge their arrows. In a similar way, twenty-five centuries hence, the brigades of Napoleon, at the battle of Mt. Tabor, not far distant, will receive the charge of the Mamelukes. But the strength of the host is in the swarming cavalry and chariots. The horses are spirited steeds from Arabia and Armenia. The riders sit upon decorated saddles, clad in armor, with helmets and lances. The chariot bands are the chivalry and flower of Asshur. The coursers are caparisoned with purple silk and embroidered cloth ; from their heads hang plumes and heavy tassels. As they hurry to and fro, flashing behind them with gold and jasper, with ivory and enamel, roll the formidable vehicles. The warriors within, the veterans of many wars, are clad from head to foot in steel ; embossed upon their shields are the heads of lions ; lofty standards of precious stuffs, embroidered, hang over their plumed helmets, and all along the line hover pennons of scarlet. In the rear are the rams and other warlike engines, the ladders for escalading, the steel tools for the mines, already battered and blunt with hard service before the fenced cities of Judah. In tents of costly and gaudy stuffs, the concubines and eunuchs of the Great King and the Ninevite nobles outnumber even the soldiers. Everywhere, from fertile Jericho to the sea-coast of old Philistia, range the foragers, and innumerable as a locust swarm, the beasts collected for burden and provision consume the pastures. Here and there some great officer—the chief cup-bearer, or the inso-

JERICHO.



lent Rabshakeh, or perhaps even Sennacherib himself—goes by in his canopied chariot attended by stately body-guards.

Doubtless that eve there was panic in Jerusalem ; but all true Israelites, confident in having the Lord upon their side, surveyed from the battlements with contempt even this array, so magnificent and appalling. The youth of true Hebrew fire, from his high watch-tower as the sun descended, looked down upon the scene. Into his mind came crowding the grand traditions of Judæa—how Jephthah smote the Ammonites hip and thigh from Aroer even unto Minnith ; how Caleb slew the Anakim in the fastnesses of Hebron ; and how the mighty Joshua had said in the sight of Israel : “ Sun, stand thou still on Gibeon, and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon,” and the sun stood still and the moon stayed until the people had avenged themselves on their enemies. When from the glittering Assyrian lines the drums and dulcimers throbbed out upon the still air of twilight, clear and far out of the height from a Jewish trumpet rang a blast of defiance. The Lord’s chosen people would abide the battle !

By the side of Hezekiah as counsellor stands a venerable figure. In the year that King Uzziah died, half a century before (this is his own account of himself), he had seen the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, with a train that filled the temple ; and while he looked an attendant seraph, seizing a coal from off the altar, had laid it upon his lips, and the voice of the Lord had bidden him go forth and speak his will until the land was utterly

desolate. Now this interpreter of the Lord's messages, the great prophet Isaiah, determines the counsels of the king. Thus he speaks:

"This is the word that the Lord hath spoken concerning Sennacherib: 'The virgin, the daughter of Zion hath despised thee and laughed thee to scorn. The daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee. By thy messengers thou hast reproached the Lord, and hast said, with the multitude of my chariots I have come up to the height of the mountains, to the side of Lebanon, and will cut down the tall trees thereof, and the choice fir-trees thereof, and the forest of his Carmel. With the sole of my foot I have dried up all the rivers of besieged places. But the house of David shall take root downward and bear fruit upward.' Therefore, thus saith the Lord concerning the King of Assyria: 'He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with a shield, nor cast a bank against it. By the way that he came by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city,' saith the Lord."

That was the prophecy which Isaiah poured forth with hot utterance, and according to the old Hebrew story this was its fulfilment: "And it came to pass that night that the angel of the Lord went out and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred and four score and five thousand, and in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.

" And there lay the rider, distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow and the rust on his mail;

And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
The lances unlifted, the trumpets unblown,
For the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
Had melted like snow in the glance of the Lord."

And Sennacherib returned and dwelt in Nineveh, and it came to pass as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch, his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezar, his sons, smote him with the sword, and Esarhaddon, his son, reigned in his stead.

Such was Assyria at its height, but a rapid decadence ensued, and at length, seven hundred years before Christ, Cyrus the Mede smote her with the sword and lighted her funeral pyre. Until the late discoveries, the tale of the splendor of ancient Oriental nations was believed to be enormously exaggerated, if not fabulous. But after all it was not so far short of the truth. Grant that the records of the kings are boastful, yet the vast artificial mounds, crumbling so long, but so mountain-like, the palaces covering acres, the leagues of sculptured masonry, are testimony to the power and state of the kings not to be invalidated. They are remains of a nation, not much behind the modern, in the useful arts; and in those which contribute to luxury and splendor, the arts among them especially cherished, they were perhaps far before.

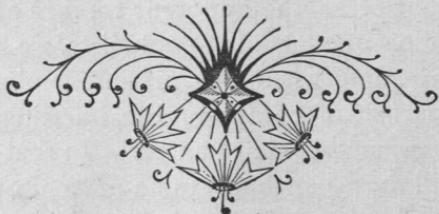
It is not strange that the modern world becomes somewhat dizzy with the spectacle, and feels inclined to recall some of its claims to increase of power and knowledge. Think,—it may be that this venerable empire will be remembered when the fame of modern nations has quite passed away. The slabs in the

British Museum have already held their sculptured record twenty-five hundred years. Which has the best chance to-day of enduring to a remote future, that imperishable rock, or the paper and paste-board books in the library close at hand, to which we have entrusted our annals? Do you know the story of the great library of Alexandria into which had been gathered the parchments and books of antiquity? Its treasures of learning were disposed on countless shelves, and quite untold. Not the Caliph Omar, as has been believed, but a mob of Christian monks, infuriated with fanaticism, set the library on fire. While the frail receptacles perished, one can imagine the temple-fronts of the Pharaohs, the pyramids, and the obelisks, looming up in the glare, crowded thick with the inscriptions of an older time. In the bright light appeared the deep-cutting, low relief, the indelible tints,—monuments like those to which the monarchs of Nineveh entrusted the story of their grandeur. Literature had lost her frailer page, but high on her ancient strongholds, she defied, from those imperishable tablets, as they flushed red from line to line in the midnight blaze, the impotent torches of man.

If we follow one school of geologists, we know that a time may come when this present geological era, amidst the rush of oceans or the bursting forth of volcanic fires, may come to an end. In that case how quickly will these perishable memorials of ours which we know as books, shrivel and disappear. But that old literature, entrenched securely within its rocky tablets, will mock the very forces of nature, as it defied in Egypt the torches of the Arabs; and new

orders of beings, searching among the fossils and deposits of a by-gone age, may read there the story of the Assyrian kings.

But what use in being long remembered unless we can be remembered with blessing! The red and shining characters in which is written the story of Nineveh, repeat a terrible tale of violence and wrong. The glory of the old empire beams like the pearl indeed, but, like the pearl, too, it is no normal or healthy growth. The glitter upon her ivory and jasper is from the tears of captives. Her scarlet and vermillion dyes are from the life-stream of crushed nations. "The stone cries out of the wall and the beam out of the timber shall answer it: Woe to him that buildeth a tower with blood and establisheth a city by iniquity!"





CHAPTER V.

JUDAS MACCABÆUS, THE HEBREW WILLIAM TELL.

THE kingdom of Judah escaped destruction at the hands of Sennacherib, but its respite was short. Soon afterwards Babylon, closely related to Assyria, and the heir of its dominion, swept into captivity in distant Mesopotamia nearly all that were left of Hebrew stock. For a time the nation seemed to have been wiped from the face of the earth. The ten tribes of Israel that had been first dragged forth never returned to Judea, and their ultimate fate, after the destruction of Nineveh, whose splendor they had in their servitude done so much to enhance, was that of homeless wanderers. The harp of Judah, silent upon the devastated banks of the Jordan, was hung upon the Babylonian willows, for how could the exiles sing the Lord's song in a strange land ! But the cry went forth at length that Babylon had fallen in her turn, just as destruction had before overtaken Nineveh. In the middle of the sixth century B.C., Cyrus, the Mede, made a beginning of restoring the exiles, who straightway built anew the Temple walls.

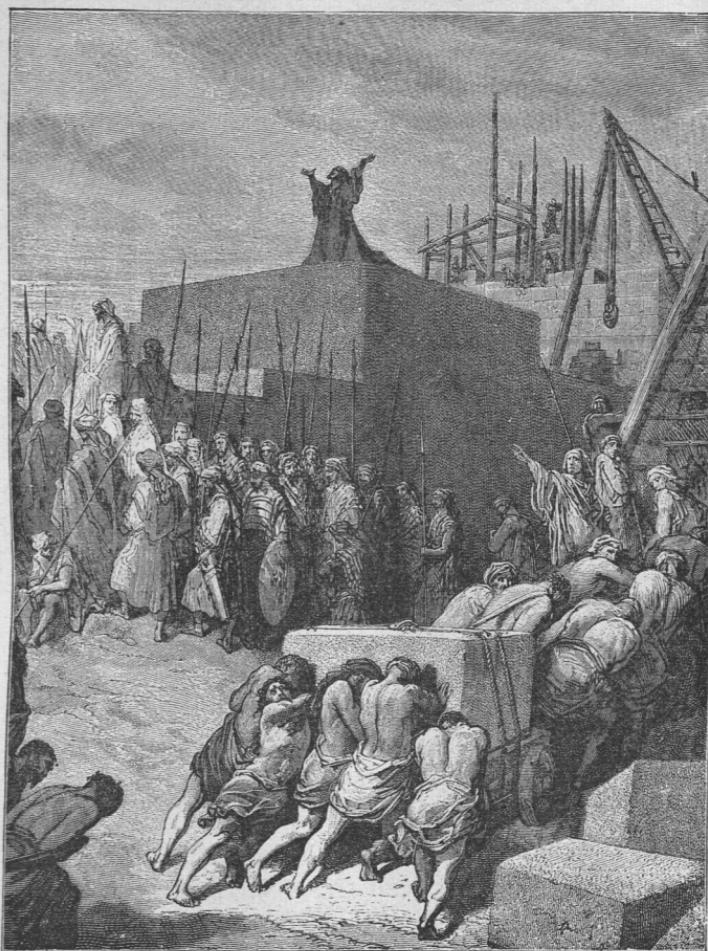
In David's time the population of Palestine must have numbered several millions, and it largely in-

creased during the succeeding reigns. Multitudes, however, had perished by the sword, and other multitudes were retained in strange lands. Scarcely fifty thousand found their-way back in the time of Cyrus to the desolate site of Jerusalem, but one hundred years later, the number was increased by a reinforcement under Ezra. From this nucleus, with astonishing vitality, a new Israel was presently developed. With weapons always at hand to repel the freebooters of the desert, they constructed once more the walls of Jerusalem. Through all their harsh experience their feelings of nationality had not been at all abated ; their blood was untouched by foreign admixture, though some Gentile ideas had entered into the substance of their faith. The conviction that they were the chosen people of God was as unshaken as in the ancient time. With pride as indomitable as ever, entrenched within their little corner of Syria, they confronted the hostile world.

But a new contact was at hand,—for the Jews, and for the world at large, far more memorable even than that with the nations of Mesopotamia,—a contact whose consequences affect at the present hour the condition of the greater part of the human race. In the year 332 B.C., the high-priest, Jaddua, at Jerusalem, was in an agony,* not knowing how he should meet certain new invaders of the land, before whom Tyre and Gaza, the old Philistine stronghold, had fallen, and who were now marching upon the city of David. But God warned him in a dream that he should take courage, adorn the city, and open the

* Josephus.

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THE REBUILDING OF THE TEMPLE.

gates ; that the people should appear in white garments of peace, but that he and the priests should meet the strangers in the robes of their office.' At length, at the head of a sumptuous train of generals and tributary princes, a young man of twenty-four, upon a beautiful steed, rode forward from the way going down to the sea to the spot which may still be seen, called, anciently, Scopus, the prospect, because from that point one approaching could behold, for the first time, Jerusalem crowned by the Temple rising fair upon the heights of Zion and Moriah. The youth possessed a beauty of a type in those regions hitherto little known. As compared with the swarthy Syrians in his suite, his skin was white,—his features were stamped with the impress of command,—his eyes filled with an intellectual light. With perfect horsemanship he guided the motions of his charger. A fine grace marked his figure, set off with cloak, helmet, and gleaming arms, as he expressed with animated gestures his exultation over the spectacle before him. But now, down from the heights came the procession of the priests and the people. The multitude proceeded in their robes of white ; the priests stood clothed in fine linen ; while the high-priest, in attire of purple and scarlet,—upon his breast the great breast-plate of judgment with its jewels, upon his head the mitre marked with the plate of gold whereon was engraved the name of God,—led the train with venerable dignity.

Now, says the historian, when the Phœnicians and Chaldeans that followed Alexander thought that they should have liberty to plunder the city, and

torment the high-priest to death, the very reverse happened, for the young leader, when he saw the multitude in the distance, and the figure of the high-priest before, approached him by himself, saluted him, and adored the name, which was graven upon the plate of the mitre. Then a captain named Parmenio asked him how it came to pass that, when all others adored him, he should adore the high-priest of the Jews. To whom the leader replied: "I do not adore him, but that God who hath honored him with his high priesthood; for I saw this very person in a dream, in this very habit, when I was at Dios in Macedonia, who, when I was considering how I might obtain the dominion of Asia, exhorted me to make no delay, but boldly to pass over the sea thither, for that he would conduct my army, and would give me the dominion over the Persians." Then when Alexander had given the high-priest his right hand, the priests ran along by him, and he came into the city, and he offered sacrifice to God in the Temple, magnificently treated both the high-priest and the priests. He granted all the multitude desired; and when he said to them that if any of them would enlist themselves in his army on this condition, that they should continue under the laws of their forefathers, he was willing to take them with him, many were ready to accompany him in his wars.

When the high-priest Jaddua and Alexander the Great went hand in hand up into the mount of the Temple, then for the first time came together the Jew and the Aryan. In the days of the early world,

in some mysterious region of Central Asia, a choice strain of men began to grow numerous and powerful. As the home became contracted, a band departed southward, whom we find, when history begins, advancing from the north into India. In hymns which have come down to us in the Vedas, they sang in honor of fire: "Neighing like a horse that is greedy for food, thy path, O fire, is dark at once"; and in honor of the dawn: "She shines upon us like a young wife; she is the leader of the clouds, golden-colored, lovely to behold." Their descendants, pressing forward, have possessed at length the whole of India.

But this Aryan troop that went southward is less interesting to us than companies that departed westward, for in these westward marching bands went the primeval forefathers, from whose venerable loins we ourselves have proceeded. They passed into Western Asia, and from Asia into Europe—each migrating multitude impelled by a new swarm sent forth from the parent hive behind. At the head of the Adriatic Sea an Aryan troop had divided, sending down into the eastern peninsula the ancestors of the Greeks, and into the western peninsula the train destined to establish upon the seven hills the power of Rome. Already the Aryan pioneers, the Celts, on the outmost rocks of the western coast of Europe, were fretting against the barrier of storm and sea, across which they were not to find their way for many ages. Already Phoenician merchants, trading for amber in the far-off Baltic, had become aware of wild Aryan tribes pressing to the northwest—the

Teutons and Goths. Already, perhaps, upon the outlying spurs of the Ural range, still other Aryans had fixed their hold, the progenitors of the Sclave. The aboriginal savage of Europe was already nearly extinct. His lance of flint had fallen harmless from the Aryan buckler; his rude altars had become displaced by the shrines of the new Gods. In the Mediterranean Sea each sunny isle and pleasant promontory had long been in Aryan hands, and now in the wintry forests to the northward the resistless multitudes had more recently fixed their seats. In the Macedonians, the Aryans, having established their dominion in Europe, march back upon the track which their forefathers long before had followed westward, and now it is that the Jew for the first time touches the race that from that day to this has been the master-race of the world. It was a contact taking place under circumstances, it would seem, the most auspicious—the venerable old man and the beautiful Greek youth clasping hands, the ruthless followers of the conqueror baffled in their hopes of booty, the multitudes of Jerusalem, in their robes of peace, filling the air with acclamations, as Alexander rode from the place of prospect up the heights of Zion, into the solemn precincts of the Temple. It was the prologue, however, to a tragedy of the darkest, to a persecution of two thousand years, the flames of which even at the present hour can scarcely be said to have died down.

The successors of Alexander the Great made the Jews a link between the Hellenic populations that had become widely scattered throughout the East by

the Macedonian conquests, and the great barbarian races among whom the Greeks had placed themselves. The dispersion of the Jews, which had already taken place to such an extent through the Assyrian and Babylonian conquests, went forward now more vigorously. Throughout Western Asia they were found everywhere, but it was in Egypt that they attained the highest prosperity and honor. The one city, Alexandria, alone, is said to have contained at length a million Jews, whom the Greek kings of Egypt, the Ptolemies, preferred in every way to the native population. Elsewhere, too, they were favored, and hence they were everywhere hated; and the hatred assumed a deeper bitterness from the fact, that the Jew always remained a Jew, marked in garb, in feature, in religious faith, always scornfully asserting the claim that he was the chosen of the Lord. Palestine became incorporated with the empire of the Seleucidæ, the Macedonian princes to whom had fallen Western Asia. Oppression at last succeeded the earlier favor, the defences of Jerusalem were demolished, and the Temple defiled with Pagan ceremonies; and now it is that we reach some of the finest figures in Hebrew history, the great high-priests, the Maccabees.

There dwelt at the town of Modin,* a priest, Mattathias, the descendant of Asmonæus, to whom had been born five sons, John, Simon, Judas Maccabæus, or the hammer, Eleazar, and Jonathan. Mattathias lamented the ravaging of the land and the plunder of the Temple by Antiochus Epiphanes, and when,

* Josephus and the Books of the Maccabees.

in the year 167 B.C., the Macedonian king sent to Modin to have sacrifices offered, the Asmonæan returned a spirited reply. "Thou art a ruler," said the king's officers, "and an honorable and great man in this city, and strengthened with sons and brethren. Now, therefore, come thou first: so shalt thou and thy house be in number of the king's friends, and thou and thy children shall be honored with silver and gold and many rewards." But Mattathias replied with a loud voice: "Though all the nations that are under the king's dominion obey him, and fall away every one from the religion of their fathers, yet will I and my sons and my brethren walk in the covenant of our fathers. God forbid that we should forsake the law and the ordinances! We will not hearken to the king's words to go from our religion, either on the right hand or the left."

An heroic struggle for freedom at once began which opened for the Jews full of sadness. An apostate Jew, approaching to offer sacrifice in compliance with the command of Antiochus, was at once slain by Mattathias, who struck down also Apelles, the king's general, with some of his soldiers. As he fled with his sons into the desert, leaving his substance behind him, many of the faithful Israelites followed, pursued by the Macedonians seeking revenge. The oppressors knew well how to choose their time. Attacking on the Sabbath-day, when, according to old tradition, it was a transgression even to defend one's life, a thousand with their wives and children were burnt and smothered in the caves in which they had taken refuge. But Matta-

thias, rallying those that remained, taught them to fight on the Sabbath, and at all times. The heathen altars were overthrown, the breakers of the law were slain, the uncircumcised boys were everywhere circumcised. But the fulness of time approached for Mattathias; after a year his day of death had come, and these were his parting words to his sons: "I know that your brother Simon is a man of counsel; give ear unto him always; he shall be a father unto you. As for Judas Maccabæus, he hath been mighty and strong even from his youth up. Let him be your captain and fight the battles of the people. Admit among you the righteous."

No sooner had the father departed, than it appeared that the captain whom he had designated was a man as mighty as the great champions of old, Joshua and Gideon and Samson. He forthwith smote with defeat Apollonius, the general in the Samaritan country, and when he had slain the Greek, he took his sword for his own. Seron, general of the army in Coele-Syria, came against him with a host of Macedonians strengthened by apostate Jews. The men of Judas Maccabæus were few in number, without food, and faint-hearted, but he inspired them with his own zeal, and overthrew the new foes at Bethoron. King Antiochus, being now called eastward to Persia, committed military matters in Palestine to the viceroy, Lysias, with orders to take an army with elephants and conquer Judæa, enslave its people, destroy Jerusalem, and abolish the nation. At once the new invaders were upon the land; of foot-soldiers there were 40,000, of horsemen 7,000, and

as they advanced many Syrians and renegade Jews joined them. Merchants marched with the army with money to buy the captives as slaves, and chains with which to bind those whom they purchased. But Judas Maccabæus was no whit dismayed. Causing his soldiers to array themselves in sack-cloth, he made them pray to Jehovah. He dismissed, those lately married and those who had newly come into great possessions, as likely to be faint-hearted. After addressing those that remained, he set them in the ancient order of battle, and waited the opportunity to strike. The hostile general, fancying he saw an opportunity to surprise the little band of Hebrews, sent a portion of his host against them, by secret ways at night. But the spies of Judas were out. Leaving the fires burning brightly in his camp, to lure forward those who were commissioned to attack him, he rushed forth under the shadows against the main body, weakened by the absence of the detachment. He forced their position, though strongly defended, overcame the army; then turned back to scatter utterly the other party who were seeking him in the abandoned camp. He took great booty of gold and silver, and of raiment purple and blue. He marched home in great joy to the villages of Judæa, singing hymns to God as was done in the days of Miriam long before, because they had triumphed gloriously.

The next year Lysias advanced from Antioch, the Syrian capital, with a force of 65,000. Judas Macca-bæus, with 10,000, overthrew his vanguard, upon which the vicoery, terrified at the desperate fighting,

retired to assemble a still greater army. For a time there was a respite from war, during which Judas counselled the people to purify the Temple. The Israelites, overjoyed at the revival of their ancient customs, the restoration of the old worship in all its purity, and the relief from foreign oppressors, celebrated for eight days a magnificent festival. The lamps in the Temple porches were rekindled to the sound of instruments and the chants of the Levites. But one vial of oil could be found, when, lo, a miracle! The one vial sufficed for the supply of the seven-branched golden candlestick for a week. This ancient Maccabæan festival faithful Jews still celebrate under the name of the Hanoukhah, the Feast of Lights.

Judas subdues also the Idumeans to the southward, and the Ammonites. His brethren, too, have become mighty men of valor. Jonathan crosses the Jordan with him and campaigns against the tribes to the eastward. Eleazar is a valiant soldier, and Simon carries succor to the Jews in Galilee. But at length the Macedonian is again at hand, more terrible than before. The foot are 100,000, the horse 20,000; and as rallying-points, thirty-two elephants tower among the ranks. About each one of the huge beasts is collected a troop of 1,000 foot and 500 horse; high turrets upon their backs are occupied by archers; their great flanks and limbs are cased in plates of steel. The host show their golden and brazen shields, making in the sun a glorious splendor, and shout in their exultation so that the mountains echo. In the battle that follows fortune does not altogether favor

the Jews. In particular, the champion Eleazar lays down his life. He had attacked the largest elephant, a creature covered with plated armor, and carrying upon his back a whole troop of combatants, among whom it was believed that the king himself fought. Eleazar had slain those in the neighborhood ; then creeping beneath the belly of the elephant, had pierced him. As the brute fell Eleazar was crushed in the fall. Judas was forced to retire within the defences of Jerusalem, where still further disaster seemed likely to overcome him. Dissensions among themselves, however, weakened the Macedonians. Peace was offered to the Jews, and permission to live according to the laws of their fathers—proposals which were gladly accepted, although the invaders razed the defences of the Temple.

The peace was not enduring. New Macedonian invasions followed ; new Hebrew successes, the Maccabees and their partisans making up, by their fierce zeal, their military skill, and dauntless valor, for their want of numbers. But a sad day came at last. Judas, twenty times outnumbered, confronts the leader Bacchides in Galilee. The Greek sets horsemen on both wings, his light troops and archers before the heavier phalanx, and takes his own station on the right. The Jewish hero is valiant as ever ; the right wing of the enemy turns to flee. The left and centre, however, encompass him, and he falls fighting gloriously, having earned a name as one of the most skilful and valorous of the world's great vindicators of freedom. For three years he had been high-priest, and as such had resolved to form an alli-

ance with a new power, far to the west—of whose conquests the Oriental world in those days was just beginning to hear—the power of Rome. When the messengers of Judas Maccabæus stood before the Senate, the City of the Seven Hills saw then, for the first time, the Jew,—the race she was in time destined to conquer, at whose hands she herself, in a spiritual sense, was destined to undergo conquest. It was the beginning of a very memorable connection, but as yet all was unknown. Simon and Jonathan, the brethren, received the body of the hero by treaty, and buried him solemnly at Modin by the sepulchre of their father.

Like Eleazar and Judas, John, the eldest son of Mattathias, undergoes a soldier's death. At one time the land is given to apostates, and the faithful undergo such sufferings as have not been seen since the Babylonish captivity. Simon and Jonathan survive, however, and possess the Asmonæan heart and arm. If there are times of humiliation, times of triumph succeed. The splendor of Jerusalem is renewed; messengers bring to the Maccabees vessels of silver, purple garments, buttons of gold, as signs of favor. Jonathan is confirmed in supremacy over Judæa and four prefectures, and Simon is made general over the country stretching from Tyre to Egypt. They in their turn die, not on the field, but by the hand of treachery. One following the other, each has been high-priest, and now with lamentations the people entomb them in magnificent sepulchres at Modin with the other mighty priests, Judas and Mattathias. Each has tried to confirm the alliance

with Rome, for the masterful quality of the Italian power in those years unfolds itself more and more.

Though the old father has gone, and all his sons, the Asmonæan vigor still lives, in grandsons and great-grandsons. As one traces the details, a multitude of traits, pathetic, picturesque, terrible, heroic, appear upon the page. An Asmonæan prince, John Hyrcanus, like his ancestors, high-priest, besieges Jericho during civil dissensions, a city defended by a kinsman, who holds in his keeping the mother and brethren of the prince. These are brought upon the wall and tortured before the prince's eyes. Threats are made that they will be cast down headlong if the siege is persisted in. The mother spreads out her hands and begs John Hyrcanus to persist in spite of the fate that may overtake her and her children ; but when he sees her beaten and torn to pieces, his courage fails.

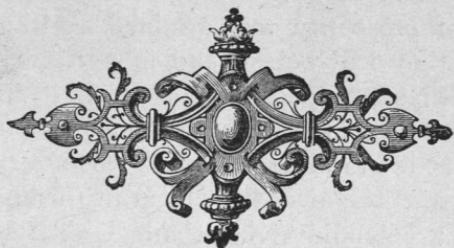
The same John, besieged at another time in Jerusalem, by still another Antiochus, begs for a truce of seven days at the time of the Feast of the Tabernacles, that the festival may be worthily honored. The truce is granted, and more ; for as the feast begins, lo, from the enemy's camp proceeds a magnificent sacrifice, messengers bearing sweet spices and cups of gold and silver, and leading bulls with gilded horns, sent by Antiochus to be offered upon the altar of the Lord.

Miraculous portents abound in the Asmonæan days. Heliodorus, sent by his Macedonian master, undertakes to rob the Temple. "Throughout the whole city no small agony was felt. Priests, prostrat-

ing themselves before the altar, besought that things given them to be kept might be safely preserved. The people rushed in terror from their houses. Women shrouded in sackcloth abounded in the streets; and the virgins, that were ordinarily kept in, ran, some to the gates, some to the walls, and some looked out of windows. All made supplication, and it would have aroused any one's pity to see the falling down of the multitude of all sorts, and the anguish of the high-priest. Heliodorus, however, unmoved, set about the fulfilment of his commission; but there appeared unto him a horse with a terrible rider, and adorned with a very fair covering; and he ran fiercely and smote at Heliodorus with his forefeet. His rider wore a complete harness of gold; moreover, two other young men appeared before Heliodorus, notable in strength, excellent in beauty, and comely in apparel, who stood on either side and scourged him continually. The desecrator fell to the earth and was compassed about with great darkness. When he had been carried away in a litter, he came at length to himself, and with softened heart offered sacrifices." Still more memorable than the wonders seen by Heliodorus, was the appearance in the heavens, at a time of confusion, of a vast and magnificent army. From buckler and spear-point flashed, as it were, lightnings. Above the clouds there gleamed innumerable golden helmets. Rank on rank they moved in shining arms.

So passed the time of the Asmonæans, with its sufferings, its heroism, its solemn portents. In each generation the league was knit with Rome, and after

a hundred years, in 63 B.C., the Roman came. Pompey, with his centurions, overpowered Jerusalem and lifted the veil before the Holy of Holies; and Crassus, on the way to his Parthian grave, stripped the Temple of its treasures. Palestine became tributary to the new conquerors, and Herod ruled, a vassal king.





CHAPTER VI.

THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS.

THE short-lived independence of the Jews, brought to pass two thousand years ago by the prowess of the Maccabees, and closed by the encroachments of Rome, is a very memorable period in Hebrew story, because then, for the last time, they were, as a nation, their own masters, in their ancient seats. The boundaries of Judah were extended, and a certain degree of internal prosperity was attained. Although as bondmen they had beheld and in part created the splendor of Nineveh and Babylon—at length, indeed, stood sometimes in places of honor in the midst of the brilliant life in Mesopotamia,—it is not probable that the Israelites, after their return to Palestine, established a splendid civilization. Unlike so many of the ancient countries, there are no ruins in the Holy Land to show that there once stood there magnificent cities. The Hebrews were not great builders; if the Temple of Solomon was of beautiful architecture, it was made so by the skill of the Tyrian workmen, whom the king obtained from Hiram, his Phœnician ally. It is not probable that other arts flourished. The prohibition of Moses against the making of graven images, or likenesses of

any thing in the heavens above, or on the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth, crippled completely painting and sculpture; and even music, an art in which in modern times the Jews have shown themselves so accomplished, was probably in a rude condition. The people were generally farmers and shepherds, men of simple ideas. Commerce, with its influences so stimulating in the way of giving breadth and intelligence, had made but feeble progress.

The Jews were sharply divided into a higher and lower class: the former claiming to be the "holy seed," descendants of the unmixed Hebrew race who had returned from Babylon for the rebuilding of the Temple; the latter of blood more or less commingled, the hybrid progeny of Israel and stocks of Canaanitish or other foreign derivation. Of the holy seed were the twenty-four orders of priests and the townsmen of higher rank; of the lower class, the villagers and peasants, who, in the times to which we have descended, had lost the ancient Hebrew tongue, employing a dialect known to scholars as the Aramaic.

Since the independence of the Hebrews might have been preserved far longer and their career as a nation been far grander, but for the violent internal dissensions into which they fell, some account of the sects and factions into which they became broken is proper. Popular belief assigned to Ezra, the great leader who in the middle of the fifth century before Christ restored the Jews to their former home in Palestine, the establishment of the Canon of the Old Testament;

but it was, probably, gradually formed during two or three centuries.* From the time of the Maccabees, the Old Testament appears as a whole, though it is probable that even yet the separate parts were not placed on an equal footing, or regarded universally with equal reverence. A little later Josephus designates as the Canon, or books of authority, the five books of Moses, or the Law, the Torah; thirteen books of the prophets; and four containing hymns or directions for life. So, substantially the Canon has stood until the present day. A number of Jewish writings, of comparatively late origin, are sometimes bound up with the Bible under the name of the Apocrypha, but these are held to be without authority. To the Canon of the Old Testament, the Jews, wherever dispersed and of whatever station, have always shown the greatest reverence. In 277 B.C., at the request of the king of Egypt, seventy learned men were sent by the high-priest from Jerusalem, who made in Alexandria the Greek translation known as the Septuagint. Paraphrases of Scripture, made in the Aramaic dialect, were communicated orally to the people, to the mass of whom Hebrew had become an unknown tongue; some of these, finally committed to writing and handed down to later times, are called the Targums.

It was a Hebrew belief that Moses, upon Sinai, received not only certain laws which he wrote down, but likewise a second revelation interpreting the first and containing also additional precepts. When he descended from the mount, it was said that he sum-

* Smith: "Dict. of the Bible."

moned Aaron, to whom he gave first the tablets, and then recited the later, more complete communication, in the same order in which it had been imparted. Moses recited the oral Law to the sons of Aaron, also ; then, to the Sanhedrim, or grand council of the nation ; and, lastly, to all the Israelites who were disposed to hear. Moses then withdrawing, Aaron repeated the oral Law as he had received it ; his sons did likewise, and after them the Sanhedrim. Through these frequent rehearsals the oral Law became firmly fixed in the minds of its first recipients, by whom it was handed down from father to son, age after age. With the original communication, much became, in process of time, incorporated which did not properly belong to it. Ezra, therefore, besides arranging the written Law, in the case, also, of the oral Law, carefully separated the original nucleus from the subsequent accretions, and the revised code, handed down as before, was held in undiminished respect by the nation in general.

A minority of the nation, in the days following the time of Ezra, neglected the oral code, declaring that duty was fulfilled by observing the regulations of the written Law. Such observance made men worthy of the title "Zadikim," or the righteous. The majority, who superadded to the observance of the written Law, that of the traditional Law also, of which the requirements were in many respects more strict, took the name "Chasidim," or the pious, accounting themselves to be more holy. The former sect became known in time as the Sadducees, taking their name from Sadoc, one of their teachers. From the

"Chasidim," who united with the observance of the traditional Law a disposition to hold themselves aloof from all Gentile contact, arose in time the Pharisees.

The Sadducees denied not only the authority of the traditional law, but also the immortality of the soul, the existence of angels and spiritual beings, and among the canonical books of Scriptures attached importance only to the five books of Moses. They believed in the freedom of the human will, and, hence, were noted, when they sat in judgment, for the severity of their sentences. Though fewer in number than the Pharisees, they surpassed them in wealth and quality. They looked with kinder eyes, moreover, upon the Gentiles, and out from their number at last was developed the party of Herodians, a body which, taking a name from the tributary princes whom at length the Romans had set up, favored strongly the Roman influence.

The Pharisees derived their name from a Hebrew word meaning to separate; and received the title either from the fact that their superior strictness set them apart from their fellows, or because they wished to avoid all contact with the world about them. The observance of the minute injunctions of the oral Law brought it to pass that their conduct became very ceremonious and scrupulous. They practised washings and fastings without number, were distinguished by the breadth of their phylacteries (bands of parchment inscribed with scriptural passages, and attached to their garments, or even their faces), and were intolerant toward dissent from

their own ideas. They thought themselves defiled by contact with publicans and sinners, observed the Sabbath exactly, paid their tithes with care, and made long prayers in public places. Though not the richest and highest placed of the Jews, they formed a very large and influential class, comprehending most of the scribes and the lawyers, among whom was preserved the lore of the nation. While they believed in the freedom of the human will, they are also said to have held that all events are predestined, in some way reconciling doctrines which appear conflicting. They believed in the resurrection of the dead and immortality, holding in the earlier period the idea of the transmigration of souls. Angels and spirits played a large part in their scheme; they were zealous in making proselytes, to which practice the Sadducees were indifferent. Converts were, however, never admitted to an equal footing with themselves, since none of Gentile birth could stand with those of Hebrew blood. The Pharisees came to constitute the vital portion and core of the Jewish race, absorbing, as time went on, more and more of its vigor. As from the Sadducees sprang the lax Herodians, so from the Pharisees proceeded the Zealots, in whom Pharisaic strictness of every kind was carried to extreme.

There was still another remarkable division. In the days which we have reached, there might have been often seen, moving austere among the tribes that came up to Jerusalem to the Temple service, or going from house to house in the villages on kindly missions of healing or comfort, certain figures robed

in white and belted about by a peculiar distinctive girdle. These were Essenes, a body everywhere held in honor, but about whose real origin and character a certain mystery has always prevailed. Some regard them as an offshoot of the Pharisees, originating in the deserts in a time of persecution; some hold them to have been, at a later time, neither more nor less than a company of Christians.* A portion, though not all, were austere—indeed, monastic in their habits; they lived in seclusion, taking upon themselves vows of charity and chastity, and holding their goods in common. In their places of retirement, in the intervals of religious exercises they cultivated the soil; they condemned wedlock, keeping up their number, like the modern Shakers, by the adoption of children. Unlike the extreme Pharisees, they respected the foreign rulers; they were much venerated by the people, who believed them to possess prophetic power. The Essenes rendered a substantial service as physicians, for they made it a point to understand the healing properties of herbs. Philo, a famous Alexandrian Jew, writing just after the beginning of the Christian era, describes one class of the Essenes, the Practici, in such terms that one would say they must have formed an almost ideal community. The whole duty of man was comprised within the three definitions—love of God, love of virtue, love of man. All men were held to be equal before God, and slavery was condemned. Large cities and wicked places were avoided through fear of temptation; in this, perhaps, we may see a

* See De Quincey's essay, "The Essenes."

touch of over-scrupulousness, as also in their abstinence from trade as promoting covetousness. Strife of words was unknown among them, as well as strife with the sword, for peace was held to be the proper state. They had recourse to arms, however, in self-defence. Among themselves their charity was perfect; they held their goods in common, and the sick and weak never suffered. Much time was spent in the study of moral and religious duties, the relation of man and wife was held in honor, children received careful nurture, and age was reverenced. After death an immortality for the soul was anticipated. The ascetic Essenes correspond remarkably in habit and discipline with the monastic orders of later ages, which undoubtedly borrowed many usages from these ancient recluses.

We must also glance at the followers of Hillel,* an enlightened teacher, who, coming from Babylon, appeared in Judea not far from the time when the Herodian rule displaced that of the Asmonæans. Anticipating work which was, as we shall see, to be performed at a later time, he had already made a beginning of writing down the Mischna, as the oral Law was called, of whose transmission an account has just been given. His doctrine was in some respects near that of the Pharisees, but he gave a far nobler, more generous interpretation to the words of Moses. His disciples are said "to have made the Law light, not because they lightly esteemed its authority, but because they revived the beneficent spirit of the original."

* C. R. Conder: "Judas Maccabeus."

Among those whom the unmixed Israelites, the holy seed, regarded as of corrupt derivation, the Samaritans received the greatest scorn. They were not distinct enough to be regarded as a separate nation, and yet they were too distinct to be properly a sect. The Jews declared that they were originally a separate people, Cutheans, and idolaters. Their territory became an asylum for renegade Jews who had rendered themselves obnoxious to punishment by breach of the law. In process of time the Jewish element came to prevail in the Cuthean nation; idolatry was abolished, the authority of the law established, and Jehovah recognized. This drawing near of the Samaritans to the Hebrews did not win from the latter favor, and as years passed events brought about the highest pitch of hatred. The builders of the new Temple after the return from Babylon, were actively annoyed by Samaritan forays; for the mongrel race had built a shrine of their own upon Mt. Gerizim, which they maintained to be the only place where Jehovah could be properly worshipped. The Samaritans accepted of the scriptures, only the five books of Moses, and rejected also the traditions, in this resembling the Sadducees. Sadoc, founder of the Sadducees, was reported, indeed, to have learned his doctrine while an exile among the Samaritans. The Pharisees, however, the bulk and the most earnest part of the Jewish race, prevented the upspringing of any sympathetic feeling. As years passed, hatred increased, until finally a bitter Hebrew curse was pronounced upon Samaria, involving land and people. The fruits

of the earth were declared to be as swine's flesh, unclean; to taste even water of Samaria was pollution. A Samaritan remnant still haunts the ancient seats of the people, in the vale of Shechem, about the well of Sychar. Their faces yet give evidence of their kinship with the Hebrews, and they have preserved to the present time, upon mouldering scrolls of parchment, a copy of their holy law, which is one of the most ancient manuscripts in existence.

Thus disunited, Palestine, though free from the Macedonian yoke, invited subjection at the hands of Rome. Religious observances absorbed a large amount of the time and energy of all. Twice in each year every male Jew was under obligation to visit Jerusalem and remain one week. Of the twenty-four orders of priests, one each week conducted the Temple service. The new order arrived on Friday, the old left on the first day of the week; so that on the Sabbath there was always a double company, and every order visited the Holy City twice in each year. In a similar way the whole nation was divided, a certain proportion of the laity going to the Temple with each company of priests. Thus the tribes went up, the tribes of the Lord, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord. The position of the "standing men," the representatives of the congregation, was one held in great respect. After a special purification these were admitted to the Inner Temple, where they stood in an elevated place before the court in which rose the altar. Below them in a great square enclosure gathered the

main congregation, the women occupying galleries above. On steps leading to the gate Nicanor, the Levites were ranged for chanting the Songs of Degrees, and the priests, in a position above all, blessed the congregation. These constant gatherings to Jerusalem and the Temple service gave opportunity to people of remote districts to become acquainted with one another, and so the nation was bound together.*

The feasts and the fasts were occasions of great importance, observed, in great part, even to the present day, by every faithful Jew with scrupulous care. Each new moon was celebrated by a festival of trumpets. The heavens were carefully watched for its appearance everywhere in Judæa, and whoso saw it first hastened to inform the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem, to whom was committed the principal authority. Such witnesses sometimes hurried to Jerusalem by scores. A beacon was forthwith lighted upon the Mount of Olives, answered by fires on the more distant hills, till the whole land was alight. Early in April was celebrated the Passover; at the end of May, the Pentecost; at the beginning of October, the Feast of Tabernacles. The Feast of Purim, commemorating the national deliverance through Esther, and the Hanoukhah, Feast of Lights, in remembrance of the renewal of the Temple worship by Judas Maccabæus, were later additions to the list of holy times. Besides the feasts there were six solemn fasts, in commemoration of national calamities. Of these, the great Day of Atonement,

* Conder.

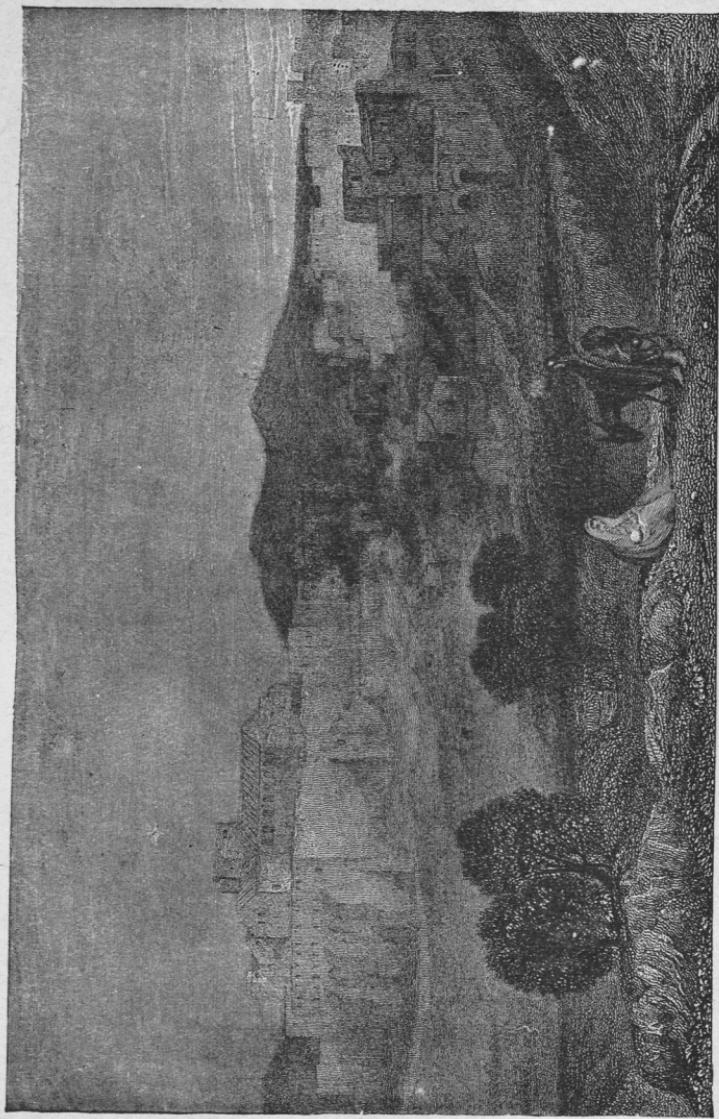
at the end of October, was most important, when the scapegoat, dedicated to the spirit of evil, was led forth, burdened with the sins of the people, to be dashed in pieces from a cliff in the dreary desert near Jericho.

No period, no race, is satisfied with its present condition. There is always a looking back to some golden age in the past, from which there has been a degeneration, and an anticipation of a happy time in the future, when all shortcomings shall be made good. Among the Hebrew race such anticipations were coupled with the vivid expectation of a Messiah, a heaven-sent leader, under whose guidance the chosen people were to attain the splendor and supremacy which were appropriately theirs. Many passages in Scripture were believed to foretell the coming of the great national Saviour. Even in the ancient Law it stood written: "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken." The desolated holy places were restored, in the expectation that "there should come a prophet to show them what should be done." According to Isaiah, "he was to be a rod from the stem of Jesse,"—"a branch of the house of David," according to Jeremiah; and so again and again, until at least seventy scriptural passages were believed to have a Messianic character. In the time of Judas Maccabæus, it was a great prophet rather than a mighty prince upon whose coming the hopes of the nation were fixed. As the glory of the Asmonæans faded, and the Romans were called in

as arbitrators in their quarrels, the Jews consoled themselves by the hope of a future king, whose right to the throne of the Hebrews should be undisputed, and who should magnificently vindicate his race. The expectation became more and more intense, some holding that the empire of the Messiah to come was to be purely spiritual, while the people generally looked for a glorious temporal prince, to be born at Bethlehem of Judæa of the house of David.

The Hebrew strength had long been wasting itself in oppressive ceremonials, and the dissensions of factions. Independence, won at such cost by the children of Mattathias, had been for many years lost, when at length there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, the Roman arbiter of the Israelitish destinies, that all the world should be taxed, and all went to be taxed every one into his own city. From the town of Nazareth in Galilee a man named Joseph, with Mary his espoused wife, people poor and simple, but of illustrious lineage, went up to Bethlehem of Judæa, to pay the tribute. Mary, being great with child, brought forth a son, and because there was no room for them in the inn, she wrapped this, her first-born, in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger. In the same country shepherds watching their flocks by night had seen great portents. While the glory of the Lord shone about them, an angel had announced tidings of great joy, the birth at last of the Saviour; and while the angels sang "Glory to God in the highest," the shepherds, departing, came with haste, and found Mary

BETHLEHEM.



and Joseph, and the babe lying in the manger. Wise men from the East, moreover, came, saying: "Where is he that is born king of the Jews, for we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him?" and lo, the star which they saw in the East went before them till it came and stood over where the young child was. When Herod, the tributary prince, who under Rome now ruled the country, heard of these things, he was sore troubled, feeling that his power was threatened, and he slew all the children of Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years and under, hoping thus to destroy the new-born king; but Joseph, warned in a dream, had departed with the young child and his mother into Egypt, where they remained until the death of Herod made it safe to return.

It is the most familiar of tales. The child whose life had been preserved by the flight into Egypt, become a boy of twelve, is lost by his parents at Jerusalem, whither they had gone, after the custom of the nation, to observe the Passover. Sitting in the midst of the doctors in the Temple, he astonishes all that hear him by his understanding and answers, for he is already about his Father's business. John the Baptist, while the people muse whether he be the Christ or not, proclaims the mightier one who shall come, the latchet of whose shoes he is not worthy to unloose; the young man Jesus is baptized, the Holy Ghost descending in bodily shape upon him like a dove, while the heavenly voice declares him, "My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." He is led into the wilderness to be tempted of the

Devil, and at last enters upon his wonderful mission. The predictions of ancient seers are fulfilled ; the blind are made to see, the deaf to hear, the lepers are cleansed, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.

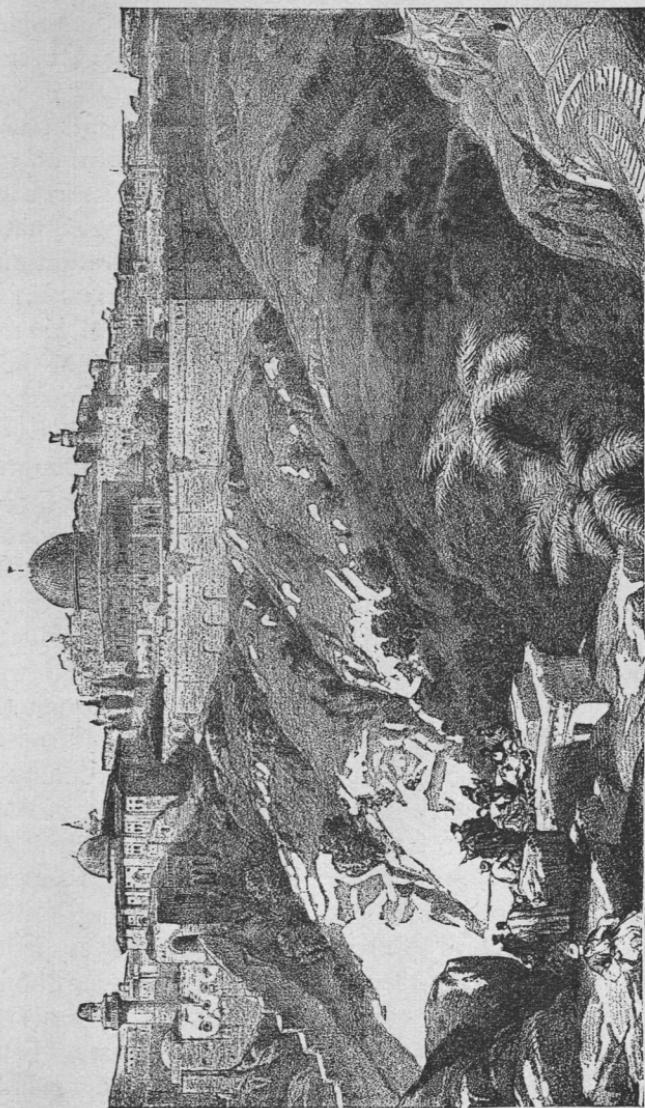
The preaching of the gospel—this last and greatest—and what is this gospel ? To love God and our neighbor, to do justly, to love mercy, to walk humbly with God, to be meek, to be peace-makers, pure in heart, to be persecuted for righteousness' sake, not to remember the old prescription, "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," but to love them that curse us, to bless our enemies, to pray for those who despitefully use and persecute us,—these are the things which make us children of our Father who is in Heaven ; even as he is perfect, so we are to be perfect.

The agony in Gethsemane is undergone, Judas betrays, the high-priest rends his clothes, saying, Jesus has spoken blasphemy; Pilate, after scourging him, delivers him to be crucified between the two thieves. As he yields up the ghost, the veil of the Temple is rent in twain, the graves are opened and the bodies of saints which slept arise and appear unto many. The angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, rolls back the stone from the door of the sepulchre. His countenance is like lightning, and his raiment white as snow, as he tells Mary Magdalene and the other Mary that Christ is risen from the dead and goes before them into Galilee. And when the disciples see the risen one, they worship him, but some doubt. And he bids them

go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever he had commanded them, and promising to be with them always, even unto the end of the world.

The disciples go forth and teach, and those whom they teach in turn bear the message to others ; and so it came about that the zealous Stephen, arousing wrath, was cast out of a city and stoned, the murderers laying down their clothes at a young man's feet whose name was Saul. Saul consented to his death, and breathing out threatenings and slaughter, went upon another mission of persecution. But suddenly there shined about him a light from heaven, and he fell to the earth and heard a voice, saying : "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me ?" and when he had been instructed, there fell from his eyes as it had been scales, and straightway he preached Christ, that he is the Son of God. Thus the band gained the great apostle to the Gentiles, who at length could give this summing up of work and danger : "In labors abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons frequent, in death oft : of the Jews five times I received forty stripes save one, thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a day and a night I have been in the deep : in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren, in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness."

THE SITE OF THE ANCIENT TEMPLE.



What preachers of a great cause have ever suffered more ! What preachers of a great cause have ever won success so triumphant !

Not all, even of those who claim the Christian name, have believed that in this first-born of a Jewish mother, God became flesh and dwelt with men. Not all have been able to believe that about the plain facts there has been no accretion of myth ; that the stories of the multitudinous heavenly host appearing among the clouds, of the water blushing into wine, of the new pulses of life in the corrupting bodies of Lazarus and the son of the widow of Nain, or of the multiplying of the loaves and fishes, are to be received with faith as undoubting as that a great teacher once walked by Galilee, and spoke to his countrymen from the Mount. Whether ordinary occurrence or unparalleled marvel, the ancient record narrates the circumstances with equal simplicity and directness. Fortunately it does not belong to him who writes this story of the Jews to say whether or not the narrative shall be accepted without reservation ; or, if it be granted that some things are to be questioned, to try to ascertain the line beyond which a just faith becomes credulity. To some this child of the Jew is the incarnate Deity ; to others, while not divine, he is nevertheless super-human ; to others still he is a man with no other inspiration than "the light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." But whatever differences of view may exist as to the nature of Jesus of Nazareth and the real facts of his career, Jew, Christian, Heathen, all have, at any rate, this stand-

ing-ground in common—that there is no higher wisdom or excellence than is contained in his precepts and was lived out in his life. It is the very beauty of holiness ; and the remembrance of this life, the hope of the realization of its promises, and the faith in the truth of its teachings, have been the support and the inspiration of thousands upon thousands of weary pilgrims, patient sufferers, and noble martyrs in the long ages that have passed.





CHAPTER VII.

VESPASIAN AND JOSEPHUS.

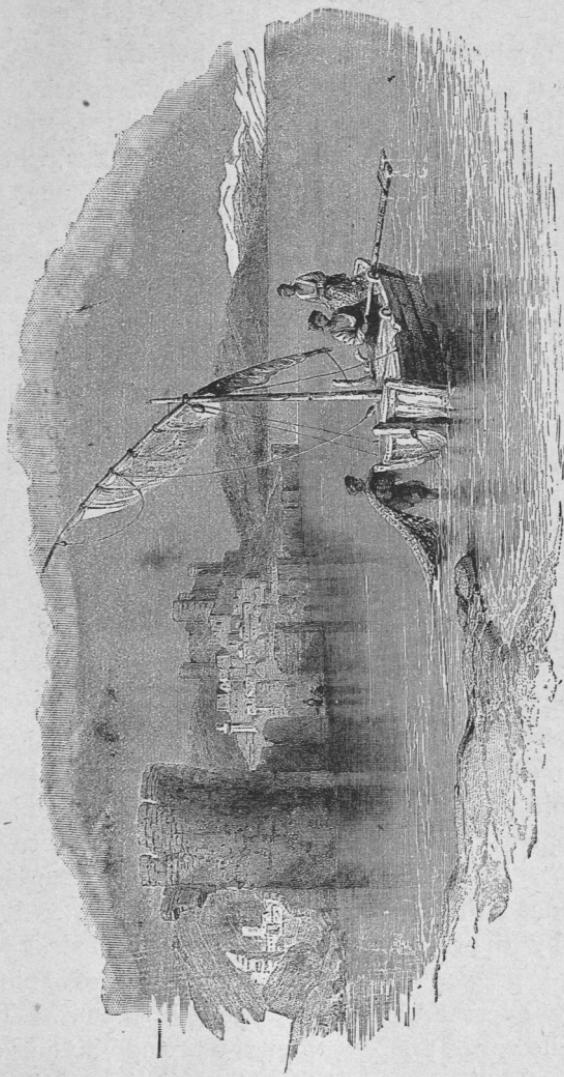
MORE than a century had passed since the Jews had paid tribute to Rome, when Gessius Florus, a man of tyrannical nature, became procurator. The Jews resisted his exactions, in spite of the exhortations of the more prudent spirits among them, who foresaw that Rome would make a pretext of the refusal to raise a charge of rebellion, and after that destroy the nation. The counsel prevailed among the Jews to refuse the offerings sent by the Romans for the Temple service, but this was a practical casting-off of the Roman yoke. The party known as the Zealots, fanatical maintainers of independence, gained power, and at length Roman blood was shed, upon which Florus marched against Jerusalem with the 12th legion. At a battle in the suburbs of the city, the masters of the world were roughly handled; nevertheless, made bold by dissensions which broke out among their adversaries, they entered the city and besieged the rebels, who took refuge in the Temple. Making a tortoise with their shields, so that with backs and heads perfectly protected they could work directly beneath the walls, the Romans brought the besieged to great straits. Florus, however, who as a

leader was inferior, drew his soldiers off when success was just at hand. As he retreated through difficult passes, his rear was attacked, and he and his army came near meeting the fate which a generation or two before had overtaken Varus in Germany. Leaving four hundred of his bravest legionaries to make head against the furious pursuers, four hundred who, like Romans, died almost to a man, he gained time to escape with the main body, losing, however, together with the detachment, his baggage and the great war engines, which were an immense gain to the victors.

Open war henceforth existed, and Josephus, a Jew of the lineage of Aaron, trained according to the best discipline of his race, and who had also been well received at Rome, was put by his countrymen in command of the province of Galilee. Afterwards as an historian he described the events. Soon a very different leader took the place of the weak Florus. The veteran, Vespasian, the best soldier of Rome, appeared with an army of 60,000. Galilee was at once attacked, whose people, following the orders of Josephus, fled to their fenced cities. He himself, with the bravest, finding it impossible to make head against the invaders, shut himself up in Jotapata, on a high precipitous hill. It could be approached only from the north, and here a mighty wall formed the defence. Vespasian spent four days in building a road by which his army could approach nearer, encamping at last at the distance of a mile. For five days the works were stormed with desperate fighting on both sides. Then the Romans drew off,

and determining to use slower means, reared opposite the defences a high bank, upon which were set one hundred and fifty engines, discharging javelins, lighted brands, and stones. The besieged, no less energetic, dragged away in sorties the mantlets which sheltered the workmen, and set fire to the timbers. As the bank continued to rise, Josephus on his side built the wall of the city higher, protecting the workmen with raw hides of oxen stretched upon stakes, against which Vespasian's missiles fell powerless. Thus the height of the wall was increased by thirty feet, and the Romans, for the moment disheartened, ceased in their efforts to overtop it.

A strict blockade was now resorted to that the stronghold might be starved out. While there was food sufficient, water was scanty, the sole supply being cisterns, which in summer were nearly dry. Of this the enemy had a suspicion, but Josephus deceived them by making the people dip garments in water and hang them, dripping, over the wall. Meantime he sent messengers, disguised in skins so that they might pass for dogs at night, who made their way by steep overgrown paths, which the Roman sentries overlooked, out into the country, to arouse all Galilee. Vespasian renewed his assaults. The Jews were lighter and quicker than the heavy-armed Romans; but the catapults were never quiet, and at length the dreaded rams, of the length of the mast of a ship, headed with iron, and hung from a high frame by the middle, began to shake the wall. A great company of men, protected by hurdles and hides, dashed the mighty beam against the works,



THE SEA OF GAIILEE.

made top-heavy by the added height, while the Arabian auxiliaries, with bows and slings, tried to prevent the interference of the besieged. Josephus managed to let down sacks filled with straw, which received the thrust of the rams: the Romans, by blades of iron fixed to long poles, cut the ropes by which the sacks were suspended. In sorties the Jews burned the hostile engines with bitumen, pitch, and sulphur. Vespasian was wounded by a spent javelin; but the siege was pressed with loud noise from the machines and the whizzing of the stones. One suspects from some of the descriptions of Josephus, as he speaks of the effects of the machines, that he himself knew how to draw a long bow. He declares that the head of a man at his side, struck off by a stone from a catapult, was driven nearly half a mile. There is no reason, however, to doubt his substantial accuracy.

The Romans at length made a breach, and against the impending storm Josephus ranged his bravest soldiers. "Shut your ears against the shouting of these men," he said, "and as for their missiles, kneel and hold your shields over your heads till the archers have spent their arrows. Fight when the stormers come." Cries and the sound of the trumpets announced the Roman charge; the day was darkened by their arrows; the column climbed slowly upward pressed together, with a roof of shields closely overhead, like an armored serpent. The Jews, however, poured upon the testudo boiling oil, which, creeping under the armor of the assailants, covered them from head to foot. A slippery paste,

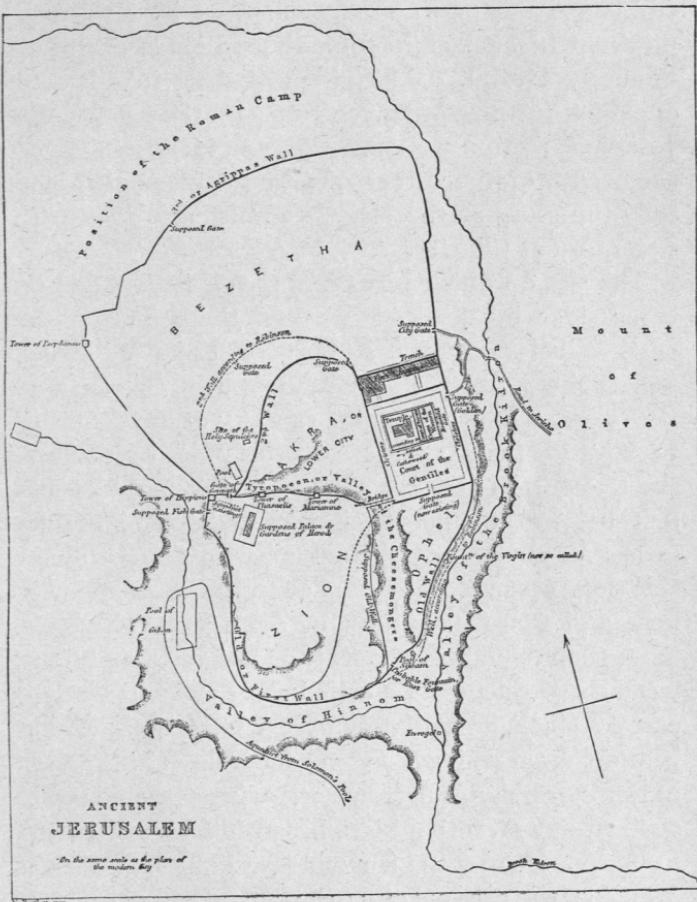
made from boiling the herb fenugreek, cast liberally upon the gangways which the Romans had prepared, made the footing uncertain. Again Vespasian was foiled. He built a bank, however, placing upon it three towers fifty feet high, cased with iron.

On the forty-seventh day of the siege, Vespasian learned from a deserter that the defenders slept in the last watch of the night. Assembling the army at that hour, Titus, son of Vespasian, and the centurion, Domitius Sabinus, succeeded in reaching the wall unperceived. In a heavy mist, they slew the guards, opened the gates, and the destruction of the city was accomplished. Together with forty of the chief men of the town, Josephus found a hiding-place in a cavern opening out from a well, but through treachery the place of concealment was made known. Vespasian, anxious to take the Jewish leader alive, sent the tribune, Nicanor, who had been his friend, to induce him with fair promises to surrender. Josephus was about to give himself up, but was prevented by his companions. "We will care," said they, "for the honor of our country." At the same time they offered a sword and "a hand that shall use it against thee." Josephus called every one by name: "at some he looked sternly, as a captain might do, and another he would take by the hand, and another he would beseech by many prayers, turning as a wild beast when it is surrounded by the pursuers, to each one as he came near." He proposed that they should perish together, but by the hands of one another, instead of suicide. Lots were cast. He who drew the first offered his neck

to him who stood next, and so forward. Finally, through marvellous fortune, Josephus and one other alone were left, and here the slaughter ended. The two survivors surrendered to the Romans. A great concourse of soldiers collected to see Josephus brought before the general, and many demanded that he should be put to death. The magnanimous Titus, however, stood his friend, and by his great influence with his father, thwarted the ferocity of the troops. Josephus now played upon the superstitions of the victor. "Have I not been sent to thee of God?" he exclaimed. "Thou shalt be emperor—thou and thy son after thee. Bind me, therefore, and keep me, to see whether my words are true or no." The flattering prophecy brought for Josephus a respite, for he was held in honor, though not yet relieved of chains.

The subjugation of Galilee followed, after the fall of Jotapata, with all the terrible circumstances of ancient warfare. Jerusalem for a time was spared, its strength making it formidable. At Rome, moreover, the emperor died, and the purple, passing to short-lived successors, fell at last, according to the prophecy of Josephus, upon Vespasian, who cut the chains from the limbs of the captive, in sign that all dishonor was removed, and assigned to his son Titus the task, so long deferred, of humbling the mighty towers of Mount Zion.

The capture of Jerusalem by Titus is one of the most memorable events in the history of mankind. It caused the expulsion of an entire race from its home. The Roman valor, skill, and persistence were



never more conspicuously displayed. No more desperate resistance was ever opposed to the eagle-emblemed mistress of the ancient world. There is no event of ancient history whose details are more minutely known. The circumstances in all their appalling features are given to us by the eye-witness Josephus, so that we know them as vividly as we do the events of the career of Grant. To understand fully the story of the siege, we must first look with some care at the city.

The site on which Jerusalem stands is bounded on three sides by deep gorges. Of these, one on the east, called anciently Kidron, or the "Valley of Jehosaphat," runs north and south; another to the west, called Hinnom, running at first parallel to Kidron, turns at last eastward—the bottoms of the two gorges meeting at a point full five hundred feet below the hills which they cut. The ravines form thus a rough parallelogram, with the northwest side left open. They are everywhere deep, with here and there precipices of red rock. The area, more than five miles about, thus bounded contains a basin-shaped depression called the Tyropœon, to the east of which, immediately over Kidron, rises Mount Moriah, upon which stood the Temple. On the west of the Tyropœon, a narrow neck of high ground swells out southward, into a high, broad hill, almost cut off from approach by the surrounding gullies. This was Mt. Zion, the original city of David, afterward known as the "Upper City," by nature the strongest point in Jerusalem. The Tyropœon formed before the Temple a kind of amphitheatre, within which was

built much of the city. Streets ran along the upper edge, others lower down and parallel, all connected by cross-ways which descended from the higher ground toward the bottom of the basin.

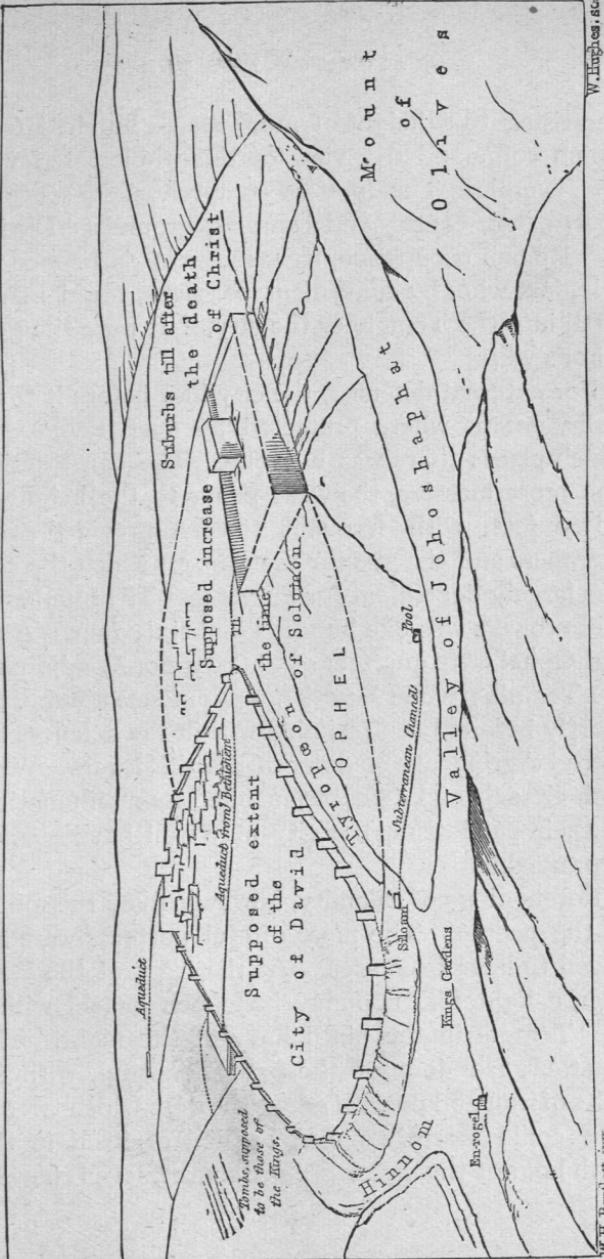
On Moriah rose first the great walls of Solomon. Spacious courts, paved throughout with marble, covered immense reservoirs, containing large supplies of water, which gushed out by mechanical contrivances. The enclosure within which the Temple stood was square, an eighth of a mile on each side. On one side was precipice, where the gorge came close up to the foundations ; on the others Solomon's wall, some of the stones of which were sixty feet in length. The cloisters by which it was surrounded were roofed with cedar ; upon the pillars of the outer court, the Court of the Gentiles, was written in Greek : "Let no stranger enter the Holy Place." Ascending a flight of fourteen steps, the inner court was reached, where the Holy Place became visible through its lofty porch. No doors were within the gate, that it might be signified that the heavens are always open. Over it was trained a golden vine with clusters as large as a man's body, and it was draped with Babylonian curtains, whose colors symbolized the elements,—blue for air, yellow for earth, scarlet for fire, and purple for the sea. Within stood the golden candlestick of seven branches, typifying the planets ; the table, whose twelve loaves of shew-bread typified the signs of the zodiac ; and the altar, whose incense signified that God was the possessor of all things. From this spot the Holy of Holies was approached, within whose solemn vacancy it was law-

ful for no man to look. Of the Temple gates, that called "Beautiful" was the finest, full seventy-five feet in height, fifty feet wide, and built of Corinthian brass. Its doors were so ponderous that twenty men could shut them only with difficulty. "The outward face of the Temple in its front wanted nothing that was likely to surprise either men's minds or their eyes, for at the first rising of the sun it reflected back a very fiery splendor, and made those who forced themselves to look upon it, to turn their eyes away, just as they would have done at the sun's own rays. It appeared to strangers when they were at a distance, like a mountain covered with snow, for those parts of it that were not covered with gold were exceeding white."

Vast and splendid the Temple certainly was. The Romans were then at the height of power, and familiar with all the magnificence of the earth, yet it seemed to them one of the wonders of the world. No doubt it far surpassed in greatness and beauty the structure of Solomon, upon whose foundations it was reared. The Herods had lavished upon it vast treasures.

The Temple possessed, besides its splendor, all the strength of a fortress; but just north of it rose a stronghold more formidable, the Antonia, named for Mark Antony, who had been, a century before, a redoubtable figure in all this region. The Antonia stood upon an elevated crag, of which the sides were faced with smooth stones, and the top surmounted by a wall enclosing a great tower or keep of the height of sixty feet. Turrets stood upon the corners of this,

ZION AORA MORIAH BEZETHA



W.H. Bartlett, Scx

GRADUAL FORMATION OF JERUSALEM.

W.H. Bartlett, Inv.

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one rising to a height of more than a hundred feet, which commanded a view of the whole interior of the Temple. The fortress comprehended spacious apartments, courts, and camping grounds. During the Roman occupation, it was always garrisoned by a legion, who, by convenient passages, could march forth into the Temple or the city, if it were the governor's will.

For external defences, the city had before it three walls, except where protected by deep ravines, in which places there was but one. The construction was most massive, the walls rising to the height of thirty feet, with frequent towers, provided with chambers and cisterns for the rain, on which the city was largely dependent for its water. The number of these towers was one hundred and sixty-four. Akra and Ophel were quarters of the city closely adjoining the Temple; while Bezetha, a populous suburb, had shortly before been included within the defences by Herod Agrippa, the builder of the third wall. With such citadels and defences, manned by men fanatical in their patriotism, the city may well have seemed impregnable.

Forebodings of calamity, however, filled the minds of the people. The most direful portents were believed to have been seen. At the feast of the Passover, a light like noonday had been beheld within the Temple in the ninth hour of the night. The great bronze door of the gate Beautiful, with its bolts of iron and posts of stone, the door which twenty men could scarcely move, opened of itself in the sixth hour of the night. Before sunset, seven chariots

had been seen driven across the sky ; hosts of men in battle order surrounded cities in the clouds, and prophets, going about the streets, foretold woe to Jerusalem.





CHAPTER VIII.

TITUS ON THE RUINS OF ZION.

THE respite which the city had was long, but Vespasian at length was firmly seated on the imperial throne, and the news spread that Titus was approaching. It was the month of April of the year 70 of our era. The Roman army numbered fully 100,000 men, as it advanced from Cæsarea. There were the three legions which Vespasian had formerly commanded, hardened in the fierce campaign in Galilee. With these the 12th was joined; the 5th, too, marched to meet Titus by Emmaus, and the redoubtable 10th by Jericho. The ranks of all were filled to the full complement, and there were multitudes of Syrian auxiliaries. In the order of their march the auxiliaries formed the vanguard. Titus, with the spearmen came later, followed by the great engines,—the rams, the balistæ, the catapults. Then proceeded the legions, marching six men abreast,—the terrible short swords for the time in the scabbard, the eagles glancing in the sun, and the trumpets wakening every echo. Rome itself had perhaps never before made a more formidable display of power.*

Besides the buckler, lance, and sword, each footman carried a saw, basket, pick-axe, and axe, a thong

of leather, a hook, and provisions for three days. The horsemen were as thoroughly accoutred, as well for siege as battle, and the entire host, by the marvellous Roman discipline, was linked and welded together into a fearful machine. "Not the bodies of the soldiers only but their souls were trained by their preparatory exercises. Death followed not only desertion, but any slothfulness; at the same time great rewards were ready for the valiant. The whole army was, as it were, but one body, so well coupled together were the ranks, so sudden their turnings about, so sharp their hearing as to what orders were given them, so quick the sight of their ensigns, so nimble their hands when set to work. What they did was done quickly,—what they suffered was borne with the greatest patience. What wonder is it that the Euphrates on the east, the ocean on the west, the most fertile regions of Libya on the south, and the Danube and Rhine on the north, are the limits of this empire! One might well say that the Roman possessions are not inferior to the Romans themselves."

Imposing, however, as was the Roman array, it might, perhaps, have dashed itself in vain against the rock-fenced city, had it not been for the factions among its defenders, which hated one another scarcely less than they hated the invaders. Of these, there was a moderate party, at the head of which stood the high-priest Ananus, which at first secretly favored making conditions with Rome, in the idea that her victory was inevitable and it was only inviting destruction to oppose her. Against these

stood the Zealots, who would hear of no compromise. Troops of robbers, who, from the ravaged country, were now driven into the city, were ready for any violence. Crowds, less ill-disposed, also sought refuge within the walls. From Galilee in particular came a noteworthy figure, a fierce and fanatical chief, John of Giscala. The foe had destroyed his town and driven its population forth, but he nevertheless declared that the Romans had suffered much and could be easily defeated. The warfare between the factions was no mere strife of words. The Zealots, reinforced by John of Giscala, and entrenched within the Inner Temple, summoned to their help the Idumæans from the south, a population brave and intensely patriotic. The Idumæans, arriving outside the walls, found the entrances barred by the party of Ananus, and while a tempest beat upon them, against which they sheltered themselves by locking their shields over their heads, they encamped for the night outside the walls. But the guards of Ananus slept, and the Zealots, taking the sacred saws of the Temple, found means, while the wind and thunder drowned all sound, to cut through the bolts of the gates and admit their allies; upon which ensued such a strife that the Temple swam in blood.

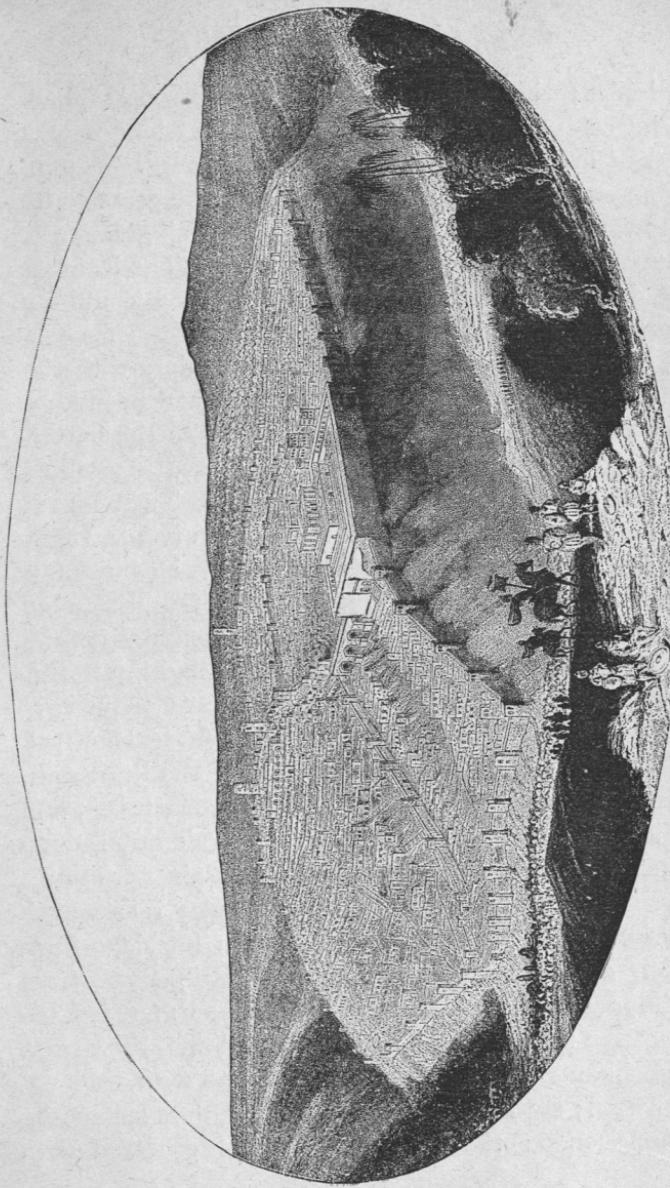
As the Romans drew near, the dissensions only grew more complicated. Among the Zealots, the most violent separated themselves from John of Giscala, and seized upon the Inner Temple. John made himself master of the Outer Temple, while the city beyond still remained in the hands of the friends

of Ananus. The high-priest, however, had fallen in the battle with the Idumæans, and the head of his party, the new champion, was now a certain Simon Gioras. The doughty John of Giscala, between two foes, built on the one hand towers to defend himself against the violent Zealots, while, with war-engines made from consecrated timber, cedars of Lebanon of great size and beauty, he defied, on the other hand, the party of Simon Gioras.

The Romans had hoped with good reason that Jerusalem, thus distracted, would make but a feeble defence, and becoming unwary, narrowly escaped, at the beginning of the siege, no less a disaster than the capture of their leader. Titus, leaving his host in camp in the Valley of Thorns, more than a league from the city, set out upon a reconnoissance with a party of six hundred horse. We may suppose that he rode forth from the northward upon the spot called "Scopus," the place of prospect, where, four hundred years before, Alexander had paused to receive the greeting of the people and the priests. As Titus approached the walls no soul was in sight, the gates were shut, and he rode too intrepidly forward. At the last moment, when the blast of the Roman trumpets could actually be heard, the factions had united, and all confronted the common danger. The combined host of the defenders acted at once with the greatest promptness and courage. A sudden sally from the town, and Titus was cut off from his escort. Without helmet or breastplate he faced almost alone a crowd of foes, making his way at last to safety only with the greatest difficulty.

The Roman leader now stationed his host warily, placing the tenth legion in the post of special danger, on the Mount of Olives, to the east, whence, across the narrow ravine, they fronted the city close at hand. But before the legionaries had entrenched themselves in their advanced position, so fierce a sortie was made from the gates that these, the very flower of the army of Titus, were with difficulty saved by a strong rescue party, which the commander himself brought to their aid as they were on the point of being overthrown. Retreating for a moment, the Jews, upon the signal of a cloak waved from the lofty battlements, attacked again, and it was only by desperate fighting that they were beaten off. The Romans at last prevailed, and presently the practised soldiers had reared for themselves an entrenched camp—a fortress too strong to be stormed, upon whose banks stood engines that threatened the walls at close range.

The host of Titus now levelled the plain on the northern side to the walls, and the camps of the other legions were drawn to within quarter of a mile of the towers. One day a Hebrew troop came out from a gate, apparently driven forth by those within. While Titus prepared to receive them kindly, they cunningly attacked his escort, which had too incautiously approached. It had been only a ruse, and Titus again suffered disaster. The hardened Romans, however, were above panic or discouragement. Slingers and archers swarmed behind the great banks which were built; pent-houses of skins and wicker-work defended them against the Jewish



JERUSALEM BESIEGED BY TITUS.

missiles; the great engines were vigorously plied. The catapults of the tenth legion cast stones of a talent in weight a distance of two furlongs. Watchmen stationed upon the walls, seeing the great white stones coming, exclaimed, "It cometh," giving the defenders opportunity to seek shelter. The Romans at last blackened the stones, and they could no longer be seen as they approached.

The Jews opposed the Roman artillery with the engines captured from Cestius, which had been kept in the great arsenal of Antonia. When the battering-rams were brought to bear by Titus, they sallied forth again with fire and sword, but Titus forced them back, slaying twelve with his own hand. Stripping the whole country of its timber, he built five towers, seventy-five feet in height. One, defended with iron, fell, through its enormous weight, upon its builders, to their great consternation and loss. But at length the immense ram called the "Conqueror," made a breach, and on this day, the fifteenth of the siege, the Romans became masters of the third wall. Four days later the second wall was also taken, and Titus, to make an impression of moderation, commanded that no prisoners should be slain, nor houses burned. He caused his army to display its strength before the besieged. Resting for a few days from toil, and strengthened by the distribution of an abundance of provisions, the Romans marched before the first wall in magnificent review. First went the infantry, clad in breastplates, and with arms uncovered; the cavalry appeared with horses splendidly caparisoned; the whole space near glittered with

warlike pomp. Josephus, now the friend of Titus, approached to advise his countrymen to yield, declaring that the invaders would now show mercy, but upon further resistance would become implacable. Many of the Jews began to regard their position as desperate, and were moved by the words of Josephus. But the leaders never wavered; they rejected all overtures, and relentlessly slew all who could be suspected of entertaining the design to submit.

Very appalling was now the situation of the defenders. The hot summer sun beat upon the crowds in the city, still immense in number, though war had swept them off in troops. From the Mount of Olives, across the narrow Kidron, hurtled day and night the projectiles which crushed houses and their inmates. Exactly what the power may have been of those engines of the tenth legion we do not know, nor how it was obtained and applied. But by the twisting of great cables, and the skilful employment of elastic timber, the Roman engineers, it is plain, had secured a force which, though of course inferior to gunpowder, was still very formidable. Through the ravines surrounding the city prowled the hostile parties, on the watch to secure any unguarded footpath, or to scale the precipices, if there was any negligence in the watch. To the north, in their new positions within the captured lines of wall, the ruthless legions, refreshed by their rest and abundant food, crouched ready for the spring that was to carry the last defences. But worse even than these outer dangers, a dreadful famine began to pre-

vail. The fighting men, ravenous, sought for food within the houses, and put to the torture the wretched inmates, to make them disclose their hidden stores. Wives snatched food from their husbands, children from their parents, mothers from their babes—for the closest bonds had become loosened. Certain poor wretches made their way by night beyond the walls, in search of herbs that might support life. Part were caught by the Romans, and, for an example, crucified before the defences. Those who managed to return were, as they climbed back, robbed by the Jewish soldiers. The battlements of the Antonia frowned, the Temple front flashed white from Moriah far over the hills. Beneath them what scenes of pain and death in the city like an amphitheatre that had once been so proud! It was now an arena for the rioting of terror.

Notwithstanding his successes, Titus had not yet gained his end. Four legions worked seventeen days to build new banks, but John of Giscala ran a mine deep into the earth beneath them, which he stored with pitch and sulphur. At the right time it was fired, and the legionaries and their constructions perished in the sudden volcano. Even while the devouring crater thus opened beneath the feet of Titus, and his army was for the moment astounded, Simon, son of Gioras, at the head of a furious column, with the wildest war shouts and weapons naked, rushed forth in a sortie, burning the ruins with fire, and smiting hundreds with the sword. The confusion among the Romans was but for a moment. In three days Titus surrounded the city

with a wall nearly five miles in circuit, producing by the blockade distress so great that the bodies of those who had perished by famine were cast out into the ravines, and lay in the streets of the city in heaps. Many desperate Jews leaped from the walls. Horrors so multiplied that even the stern Titus called God to witness that he was not responsible. But still he pressed the siege. Timber was brought from twelve miles distant for new towers and engines. Attacking once more with the rams, holding their shields linked into a tortoise over their heads, the Romans broke four great stones out of the last wall, and made a breach. Lo, John of Giscala had built another wall behind, and stood on its summit defiant!

But now the end was really near. It was announced one day that twenty soldiers with the standard-bearer of the fifth legion had scaled the wall of Antonia, and sounded their trumpets from the top. Titus was at hand with supports and the fortress was presently in his possession, John and Simon fleeing to the Temple to stand at bay. Choosing thirty from each company, with a tribune over every thousand, and Cerealis, a valiant leader, captain over all, Titus sent a chosen band to attack by night, while he oversaw all from a watch-tower. The last days of Jerusalem had come, but the death-throes were Titanic. From the ninth hour of the night to the fifth hour of the day neither side had advantage. The Antonia was destroyed to facilitate access to the Temple walls, and the Romans swarmed upon the roof of a cloister by which the Jews might be ap-

proached. But the besieged preparing a conflagration with wood, sulphur, and bitumen, consumed them in a terrible holocaust. From hour to hour it was constant sortie and repulse, until at length for the Hebrews a direful day arrived, the anniversary of the destruction of the Temple by the power of Babylon. A soldier, then, upon the shoulders of a comrade, succeeded in casting a torch through a door in the wall which led to the chambers on the north side of the Temple. Titus would have avoided this, for he was reluctant to destroy what was the glory of the whole world. The conflagration spread, however, fanned by a tempest; in the flames, besiegers and besieged, locked into the final struggle, perished until the bodies were piled against the very altar, and the blood ran down the steps. The ground could not be seen for the dead. The furious priests brandished for weapons the leaden seats and spits of the Temple-service, and rather than yield, threw themselves into the flames. Titus and his captains, entering the Holy Place, found it beautiful and rich beyond all report. The fire fastened upon all but the imperishable rock; the Roman standards were set by the eastern gate, and Titus received the salutes of the legions as emperor.

Joshua, the priest, surrendered the candle-sticks, the tables, and the cups, all of gold—the curtains and garments of the priests—the precious stones, the dyes, purple and scarlet,—the cinnamon, cassia, and spice for the making of incense. The last place of refuge in the upper city yielded and the Romans shouted from the walls. All was at length over. John of

Giscala died in prison of starvation. Simon, having put on a white tunic beneath a purple robe and surrendered, appeared afterward at Rome in the great triumph of Titus. The city was razed, excepting three towers and part of the wall, which were preserved that all might know how great a city Rome had taken. The soldiers were rewarded with crowns of gold, with spears having golden shafts, with chains and ensigns of silver. Of the Jews, says Josephus, 1,100,000 had been slain, 97,000 survived as captives, of whom the handsomest young men were sent to Rome to grace the triumph of the conqueror; the rest were sold into slavery.

What a picture is suggested to the imagination by the fearful tale! From the northern mountains, the forests were fairly swept to furnish timber for the military engines. The herds and harvests disappeared upon the plains, that the invaders might have food. In the ruined cities, the people had been slain, or had fled from the sword to take refuge in Jerusalem. How the mind of the world in those days was fastened upon those heights, so fearfully contested! The grim veteran wearing the purple at Rome thought of his son there in armor, and exulted or trembled as the messenger galleys brought the varying news,—now that Titus had stormed a line of wall,—now that John or Simon had destroyed a cohort by a mine or brought down a tower. Far and wide, from Asia, from Africa, from Europe, had been gathered the soldiery which the genius of Rome had been able to turn into such an instrument of iron.

In all the corners of the earth men and women hung expectant upon word from the great Hebrew stronghold, for sons and neighbors were there among the strivers. It was indeed brought low, but at the cost of what devastation to the victors!

The narrative of Josephus is made vivid by many personal incidents. Antiochus of Commagene, a young Syrian prince of Macedonian descent, comes with a band trained after the manner that had given victory to Alexander, and haughtily deprecates the conduct of the Romans, who allow themselves to be so foiled. Titus gives the prince an opportunity to show his own prowess. His band attack bravely, but the Jews soon teach them to estimate more correctly the difficulty of the task which the Romans have undertaken. The horseman Pedanius, the Jews having made a sortie, catches by the ankle a young soldier, as they retreat. The youth is robust of body and in his armor; but so low does Pedanius bend himself downward from his horse, even as he is galloping away, so great is the strength of his right hand, and so firm his horsemanship, that he prevails. He seizes upon his prey as upon a precious treasure, and carries him captive to Cæsar. Artorius in the holocaust being surrounded with fire upon the roof calls to him Lucius, a fellow-soldier, a tent-fellow who is in safety. "I do leave thee heir of all I have, if thou wilt come and receive me." When Lucius comes, Artorius throws himself down upon him, saving his own life, but dashing his friend to death against the stone pavement.

In such terrible colors Josephus portrays the destruction of Jerusalem. It is not probable that the horrors are exaggerated, nor the desperate valor of the besieged, nor the unshaken persistence of the besiegers. Vast as are the multitudes put to the sword and swept into captivity, the well-established character of ancient warfare makes the account of all the ruthless slaughter and devastation entirely credible. The whole land was nearly depopulated, and the Jews have henceforth been wanderers without a country. In some respects the story of Josephus must be received with abatement. He himself can scarcely be regarded as other than a renegade, living at ease among the Romans with quite too much equanimity while his countrymen undergo such terrible ruin. Probably his portraiture of Titus is too favorable, as on the other hand his picture of Simon, John of Giscala, and other defenders of the city, is quite too dark. He has, however, narrated a great chapter in the world's story, with a patient fulness of detail almost unexampled among the writers of antiquity, and we stand in his debt. He follows Titus to Rome, and appropriately continues his account of the wars of the Jews, with a description of the splendid and cruel triumph of Titus.

Vespasian welcomed with joy his victorious son, and on the appointed day the emperor and the conqueror, coming from the temple of Isis, appear before the multitudes of Rome, crowned with laurel, and wearing the ancient purple habits belonging to their family. Seated in ivory chairs upon a tribunal before the cloisters, without arms, and clad in silk

instead of steel, the stern soldiers viewed the streaming pageant, and received the acclamations of the legions, marching past with all possible military pomp. Josephus finds it impossible to describe the multitude of shows, the silver, gold, and ivory, contrived into innumerable shapes, and so borne along, that it did not appear as if carried, but ran on like a river of splendor. The richest purple hangings, Babylonian embroidery, precious stones in crowns of gold and ouches, spoils of the conquered,—of these there was such a number that none could think them to be rarities. A crowd of captives, whose costly adornment concealed the cruel wounds received in battle, and the emaciation produced by hunger in dungeons, bore along the objects, once the possession of their countrymen, but now the booty of the victors. Great structures rolled forward three or four stories in height, draped and spread with rich carpets and set off with precious metals. Upon these were presented with all possible vividness portraiture of war. There was to be seen a happy country laid waste, entire squadrons slain, the flight of fugitives, the seizure of captives. High walls were represented overthrown by machines, upon which an army poured itself through the breach. Then followed the supplications of enemies no longer able to defend themselves, the conflagration of temples, the casting down of houses upon their owners. Rivers, also, after they came out of a large and melancholy desert, ran down not into a land cultivated, nor as drink for men or cattle, but through a land still on fire on every side,—for the Jews related that such a

thing they had undergone during the war. The workmanship of all this was so lively and magnificent that it seemed to the spectators as if they were really present at actual scenes.

Then, after a great number of ships and other spoils had passed, was borne along the booty from the temple. These were the golden table of many talents weight, the golden, seven-branched candle-stick, the sacred tablets inscribed with the laws of the Jews. The broken-hearted Hebrews were forced to behold these objects, heretofore preserved in their innermost shrines, and possessed of the utmost sanctity, now exposed to the gaze and touch of the Gentile rabble. Rome, however, exulted in the humiliation. Images of victory were carried aloft, following the trophies. When the long train had slowly moved past, Vespasian, Titus, and his brother Domitian, descending from their lofty seats, proceeded after, while all the people shouted for joy. Vespasian built a shrine to Peace, in which were laid the golden vessels and instruments from the Jewish Temple: the tables of the Law and the purple veils of the Holy Place were deposited in the royal palace itself. Conspicuous in the great procession had moved the captive Simon, son of Gioras, the brave defender of Jerusalem. No trace of magnanimity appeared in the treatment accorded to him. A halter was set upon his head,—by way of mockery a train of seven hundred of the handsomest captives attended him,—as he proceeded he was tormented by his conductors. He was slain at last at the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus.

The arch of Titus still spans the ancient Sacra Via at Rome, at the top of the Velian ridge. Its beautiful proportions make it one of the most interesting monuments of the eternal city. Its noble sculptures, unfortunately, have not been well preserved, but still within the vault can be traced the seven-branched candlestick, the golden table, and the sorrowful train of Jews, as the captives bear the desecrated relics of the destroyed Temple beneath the cruel eyes of their conquerors. So, after eighteen hundred years, the solemn marble commemorates a tragedy than which calamity was never more complete!

Is the volume closed? Is the career of the Jew finished? Not so. In a century or two, he has accomplished as an outcast the most momentous of human conquests. We have already followed in brief the career of the Aryan races, in their majestic descent from their mysterious mountain cradle until they possess Europe,—then at last in the power of Greece, and a little later, in the power of Rome, come into contact with the Jew. The Aryan races go forward, as the centuries lapse, to make Europe, among the divisions of the world, the especial seat of power and civilization. As upon the night of barbarism, there flashed first the splendor of the Hellenic beacon, followed soon by the blaze of Rome, so, in his turn, came the Goth, kindling slow like anthracite, then through long centuries making bright the central plains and the islands of the sea. A torch, late, but vivid with promise, shone at last upon the



ARCH OF TITUS.

Northeastern steppes. Meanwhile the Atlantic barrier of tempest and surge was at last broken, and the Western world, even to the Ocean of Peace, has become all alike. So the Aryan, with face ever toward the setting sun, has run his flashing series, till the West is East again, and the round world is becoming belted with his light. It is a tale of conquest never ending,—of the spreading of a radiance that never grows dim.

There was one, however, to master even the master,—to bring light even to the light-bringer. In the midst of his path the exultant Aryan encountered this swarthy, burning-eyed Semite of the Syrian hills and plains. His limbs were marked by the weight of the fetters he had worn as a bondman in Egypt. Scarcely had he been able to cope with the puny tribes of Syria, with Philistine, and Amorite, and the men of Moab. Driven by the lash of taskmasters, he had constructed the palaces of Nineveh. In Babylon he had been broken and sundered. Suffered at last to return from exile, as he built anew his temple-walls, his feeble hands could scarcely quell the attacks of the petty freebooters of the wilderness. What respect could a creature, so crushed and dismembered, receive from the superb brethren of the great Aryan household, robust of limb, imperial in brain, trampling the world into servitude! He was but a despicable opponent. So thought the sons of the captains of Alexander, and they tore him anew beneath the harrow of invasion. So thought the power of Rome, and the ambitious Titus made the neck of

the Jew a stepping-stone to the imperial throne. Where in the history of conquests has there been annihilation so utter? But it was only a superficial victory that the Aryan won. From the foot of a cross upon which had died an obscure disturber of the peace, of peasant birth, went forth twelve poor men who had loved him. How trifling the circumstance! One day at Athens, upon Mars Hill, the travel-worn tent-maker, Paul, addressed, not far from the altar to the unknown God, a supercilious crowd. What mattered that small event! At Rome the passionate agitator, Peter, crucified at last head downward, died, confessing to the last the teacher in whose name he had spoken. But such things were done every day. What could a Jew effect? In the grapple between Aryan and Semite, the Semite was apparently crushed out of life; but even while the knee of the ruthless victor was upon his breast, the victim spoke a calm, strong mandate which abashed and overcame. "Yield to me," said the prostrate Jew, "in that point where the soul of man feels most deeply,—his thought of the great invisible world. Your deities, Zeus, Mars, Odin, are not gods but phantoms. Elysium, Tartarus, Walhalla, it is all unreal. Straightway dash in pieces your altars, though the smoke of sacrifice has ascended thence for ages. Straightway dismiss every hymn and precept, every rite and rule. Ended forever be libation and augury, obeisance of flamen, chant of vestal, the oracular whisper of the sacred oaks, the frenzy of the Pythoness aglow with the God. Dismiss it all as false. Take from me a faith which

shall last you for ages, burn in your deepest soul, inspire you to the grandest which you shall ever undertake. Accept Jehovah, my God, as the only God. Accept my race as the chosen race ; accept its literature as sacred and infallible. Reverence my land as a holy land. Accept a man of my race, not only as the Redeemer of the world, but the incarnate God himself. That your subjection may be the more marked and utter, this crucified Galilean whom I force you to receive as Lord and Saviour, I myself will utterly reject and contemn, requiring you to reverence what I despise as folly and superstition !”

Thus spoke the eagle-faced, burning-eyed captive, homeless, broken, humiliated, to his Aryan subduer at his very proudest. Did the Aryan obey? Straightway the Aryan obeyed. Greek, Roman, Celt, and Teuton pass under the yoke of the Jew. In his turn comes the Slave, equally submissive, all the stronger brethren of the Aryan household enthralled really by the Semite, though superficially they seem to have vanquished him—their subjugation maintained through all these nineteen slow-lapsing centuries !

Is it a supernatural conversion, as the Christian world has always maintained, or can it all be explained according to the natural sequence of cause and effect, as the rationalist will assert ? Whether natural or supernatural, the little race that has thus brought the world to its feet has possessed a pre-eminent force which has made its history unique. What the Jew has wrought is a marvel among marvels. It has been no strange thing upon the earth for

beings in human guise to be made gods. Hercules, Odin, Alexander, Cæsar, and many another have been raised to the heavens and worshipped. Only, however, in the case of this first-born child of a Jewish mother has the apotheosis endured.* He stands in this exaltation, not in the wild fancy of barbarians, but in the trained and cool judgment of the races whose brain and vigor have made them foremost among men. These have felt that he spoke as never man spoke, and was the embodiment of his own gospel of love in his life and in his death. Who will say that his name is not above every name? If we refuse, as some men do, to ascribe to him a super-human character, then how astonishing the miracle, that a Hebrew peasant has been able to so influence the destinies of mankind!

* Disraeli : "Tancred."

